

Jeff Jarrett: "I'll Carry On Ric Flair's Legacy!"
FULL-COLOR CENTERFOLD: HULK HOGAN



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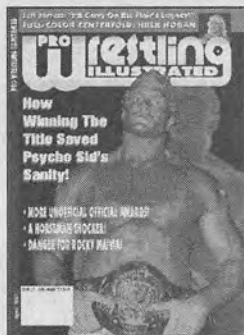
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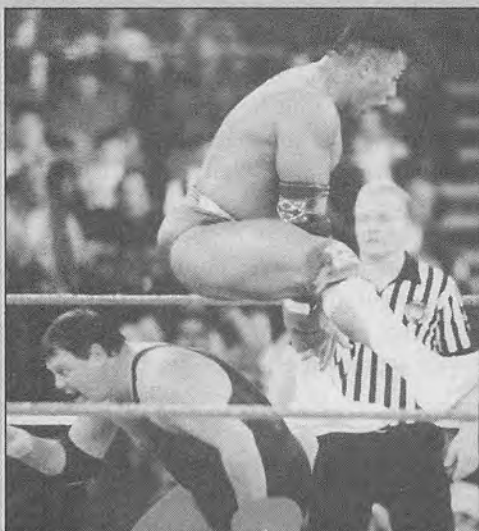
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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

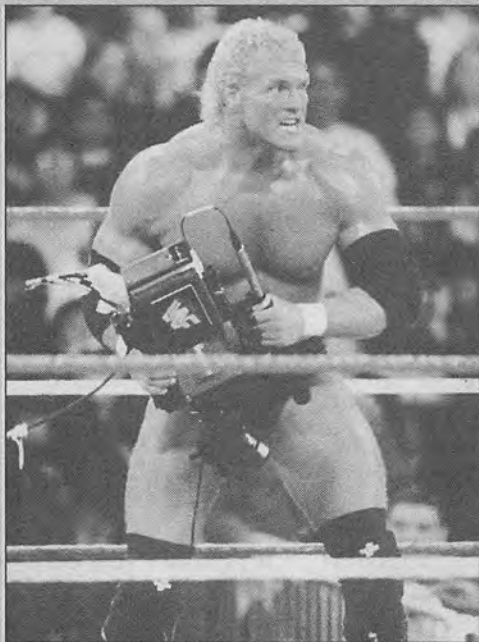


COVER DESIGN:
Matthew Stillwagon

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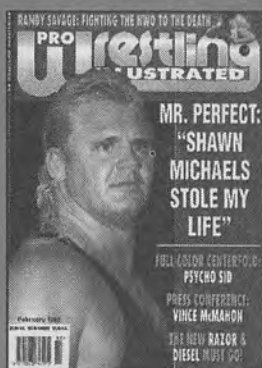
between falls

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PERFECT CRIME



Curt Hennig might believe that Shawn Michaels robbed him of his great future, as we noted in the February 1997 issue, but many of our readers think that the real criminal is Hennig himself.

"Shawn Michaels is no more responsible for any problems Hennig might have than I am," wrote Kerry Livingston of Marietta, Georgia. "Hennig is just embarrassed because he never was the perfect wrestler that he claimed to be."

"Hennig is just jealous of Shawn's success," said "PWI Hotline" caller Joey Burton of Tempe, Arizona. "Shawn has it all—the looks, the talent, and a healthy body. Hennig just wishes he could be Shawn."

But not everyone thought Hennig was in the wrong.

"Hennig never had a chance to settle his feud with Shawn, and that bothers him," wrote Shirley Lange of Hartford, Connecticut. "He just got tired of seeing Shawn flaunting his success in his face when Shawn knew Hennig couldn't do anything about it."

WOMEN OF WRESTLING—WOW!

I enjoyed the PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED Presents *The Women Of Wrestling* special issue immensely, especially the photos of Sherri Martel. What I did not enjoy was seeing Sherri ranked only number 12 in "The 50 Greatest Women Wrestlers Of All-Time" section. Sherri deserved to at least be ranked in the top 10. After all, she has defeated the top-ranked Fabulous Moolah and number 10 Madusa. She is certainly a great manager now, but I do think her accomplishments in the ring should have earned her a higher ranking.

MIKE PANZER
West Warwick, RI

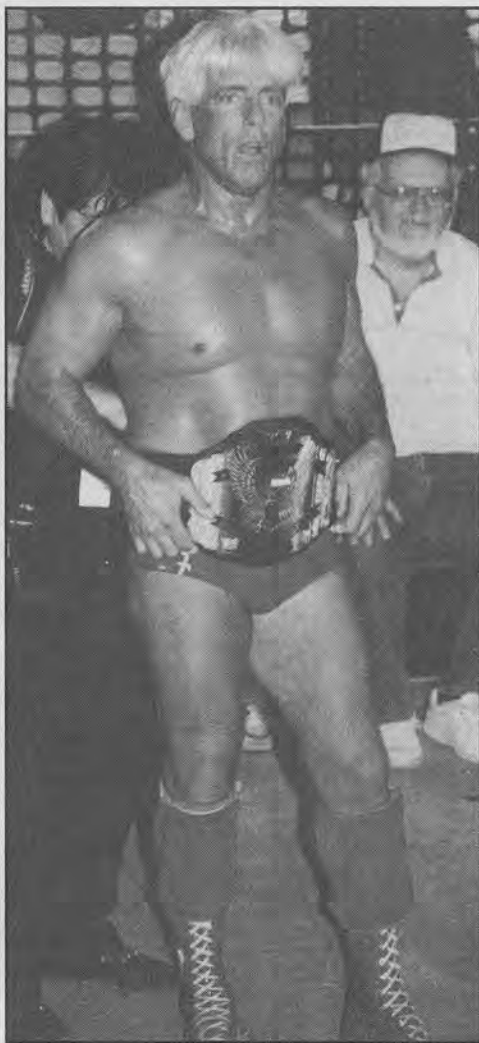
The *Women Of Wrestling* issue was great! It's about time that the women of this sport were finally recognized for their contributions. I think women are generally taken for granted by everyone, or just written off as mere objects, but they serve an important role in wrestling—as competitors, valets, and managers.

One woman, or shall I say, one lady, really caught my attention: Lady Alexandra. Alexandra is probably the closest any woman has ever come to being the quintessential female. Please, please print as many photos of her as possible. I'd really appreciate it!

MITCH TECCO
Marlton, NJ



Sherri Martel slugs Jerry Sags of The Nasty Boys. Reader Mike Panzer is a big fan of Sherri, mostly because of what she accomplished as a wrestler, and thinks we gave her a raw deal in our special *Women Of Wrestling* issue.



Because of an injury, Ric Flair was stripped of the WCW U.S. title this fall. Reader Rohan Unrau was appalled that Flair was stripped while World champ Hulk Hogan is allowed to keep his title despite the fact that he rarely competes.

STING-ING ATTACK

I can't understand why Sting is acting the way he is. He just shows up at *WCW Monday Nitro* and attacks people. If he's a member of the New World Order, he should just come forward and say so instead of beating up WCW guys like Jeff Jarrett and Rick Steiner. Maybe this is Sting's way of getting back at his best friend and tag team partner, Lex Luger, who didn't believe it was a fake Sting in the NWO limousine this fall. Luger, I think, betrayed the one person who supported him, and look what happened. Luger lost a friend, and WCW lost a wrestler.

I just hope Sting comes to his senses and realizes that his fans still love him and want him to defend WCW.

JAMIE REEVES
Maysville, GA

DOUBLE-STANDARD VICTIM

I am completely appalled by the WCW powers-that-be for stripping Ric Flair of the U.S. title just because he's injured. I am so sick of this double-standard. That puke Hulk Hogan sometimes goes more than 60 days without defending his belt, and the WCW suits simply look the other way. Why should Flair then be stripped? Of course, now that Eric Bischoff is a member of the New World Order, he will do whatever he can to make sure Hogan picks his opponent for this year's title defense very carefully.

ROHAN UNRAU
Morris, Manitoba

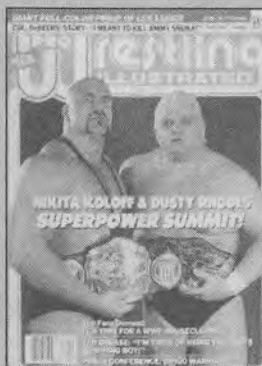
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10 YEARS AGO IN PWI

The cover of the April 1987 issue featured Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff in a show of superpower solidarity. These two former foes came together to form a tag team following Magnum T.A.'s career-ending car accident and created quite a stir in the NWA.

Elsewhere in the magazine: For the first time, Lex Luger was featured in a PWI centerfold. It came just months after he was voted Rookie of the Year for 1986 by readers of the magazine. At the time, we wrote that Luger would be the man to "rule the sport for the rest of the 1980s—and all of the 1990s!" ... The Dingo Warrior (a.k.a. The Ultimate Warrior) spoke about his former manager Gary Hart, the Von Erichs, and his future in "Press Conference" ... We asked numerous WWF fans about the state of affairs in the federation and concluded that it was time for a WWF housecleaning! ... Ted DiBiase, disgusted that he wasn't earning UWF title shots by enduring a series of country whipping matches with Michael Hayes, declared, "I'm tired of being the UWF's whipping boy!"

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RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

GOLDUST IS HEARING cheers! What's happening in the WWF? 'Dust now has a burning desire to get into the ring with Intercontinental champion **Hunter Hearst Helmsley**, but not because he wants to kiss him. No, he wants to pound Helmsley and take that I-C belt from him.

The trouble between the two began when **Marlena**, Goldust's "director," admitted to him that

Helmsley, a notorious ladies' man, had been making passes at her. This incited Goldust, who interfered in Helmsley's title defense against **Marc Mero** at the WWF's In Your House XII pay-per-view in December, just when it appeared Goldust was nearing victory.

Hunter lost the bout by countout after Goldust whacked him over the head with the



Goldust and Marlena (above) are hopping mad at WWF Intercontinental champion Hunter Hearst Helmsley (top right). HHH made a pass at Marlena, and now Goldust is on the verge of becoming—"gulp"—a fan favorite.



For months, Jimmy Hart stood in the corner of Big Bubba Rogers for his WCW matches; he had no idea Bubba was even considering joining the NWO—until it happened. Hart doesn't know who he can trust at this point.

Intercontinental belt (he also hit Mero with it, but Marc was only momentarily stunned, and he made it back into the ring to beat the 10-count).

The next night at *WWF Monday Night Raw*, Goldust and Marlena sat in the audience as Helmsley again beat Mero. After the match, though, HHH picked up the microphone and taunted Goldust, yelling, "Marlena knows what a real man is. She's been with me!" Goldust went berserk, tore off his blond wig and gold robe, and went after Hunter, who fled back to the safety of the dressing room.

Goldust received a loud ovation from the crowd for this, and he appeared to enjoy it. Later in the evening, he told our reporter, "Goldust is a changed individual from this moment on. Hunter Hearst Helmsley has pushed my buttons, but in the wrong way. Marlena wouldn't waste her precious moments with that unsavory character. I want him in the ring, I want justice, and I want my Intercontinental belt back!"

Jimmy Hart tells me that his former charge **Big Bubba Rogers** gave him no indication that he was

going to join the NWO.

"The night before he did it, we had a long talk about how slimy Hulk and the rest of the NWO was," Hart said. "He told me he'd

rather quit the business than go with them. It was all lies. I don't know if I can trust anyone after this."

"I've changed my persona several times just to throw off the game plan of everyone else," Bubba said. "I let Jimmy Hart feel secure, but '**Hollywood**' **Hulk Hogan** and I wanted to slap the little weasel in the face once again, just for a laugh. Man, the look on Jimmy's face when I joined the NWO was priceless. He was so shocked that I thought he'd have a heart attack!"

Wolfie D and **J.C. Ice**, known collectively as **PG-13**, are now members of the **Nation of Domination** and are anxious to start competing in the WWF.

"It's an honor to be in a group headed by the brilliant **Mr. Clarence Mason**," Ice pointed out. "Our immediate goal is to make sure **Faarooq** is not sneak-attacked by that maniac **Ahmed Johnson**, but we want to make it clear that the tag team belts are



J.C. Ice (shown choking Tracey Smothers) is not only back with his old PG-13 tag team partner, Wolfie D, he's part of the Nation of Domination. He and Wolfie might soon make a run at the WWF World tag team title.



Mabel and Mo hadn't been teaming much of late, but they recently reunited and won the PWF tag team championship. Mabel, however, says the reunion might only be temporary.

our next concern. After Faarooq takes care of Ahmed Johnson and we get our hands on the tag team belts, then Faarooq will challenge and beat 'Psycho' Sid for the heavyweight championship of the world."

"The Intercontinental championship belt will be ours as well when our new member—a man whose name we will not disclose at this juncture—destroys Hunter Hearst Helmsley," added Mason.

Mike Anthony is the new Windy City Wrestling heavyweight champion, having beaten "Iron" **Mike Samson** in a best-of-three-falls match ... **Notorious Norm** has added "**Beef Stew**" **Lou Marconi** to his stable in Pro Wrestling Express ... I was a bit surprised to hear WWF fans cheering the World tag team champions, **Owen Hart** and "**British Bulldog**" **Davey Boy**

Smith, in some of their matches with the AAA team of **Cibernetico** and **Pierroth Jr.** this winter ... WWF newcomer **Braccus** reminds me of a very young **Ivan Putski**. He's got a great muscular frame, and if he keeps improving quickly, the WWF might have a future superstar on its hands.

Last issue's **Don Laible** trivia question was this: "What man, using the name **Beau James**, started his career in 1976 as the manager of **Ray Stevens**?" The answer is **Jimmy Garvin**. This issue's question: "His jobs prior to becoming a wrestler included being a disc jockey and a sign-painter. Who was he?" The answer will appear in next month's "Ringside."

After splitting up for much of 1996, **Men on a Mission**—**Mabel** and **Mo**—are teaming again, and they've just won the Pro Wrestling

Federation tag team belts from **The International Death Squad**—**Baby Huey** and **The Equalizer**. Do they plan to remain together in 1997? "We're not looking to do that," Mabel told me. "Mo knows that I have a strong desire to go out looking for singles titles. When the PWF promoters asked us to come in for this match, we both felt good about it, and we'll defend the belts with honor and pride. However, I can't promise Mo that if I get an opportunity to go after a singles belt on the night of a tag team title defense that I won't go for the singles title instead. No hard feelings, but we'll have to see what happens in the future."

I photographed at least a dozen great matches between **Ric Flair** and **Roddy Piper** during the 1970s. The hatred between those

(Continued on page 10)

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ringside

(Continued from page 8)



If you've followed wrestling for the last 15 to 20 years, you probably remember some of the wars Ric Flair and Roddy Piper had. It's hard to believe they're on such friendly terms now.

two was incredible. It was as if all either man cared about was ending the other's career. Never—and I do mean *never*—did I think I'd see them pat each other on the back and tell each other how great the other one was. So you can imagine my surprise when Flair recently offered to stand in Piper's corner

for his match against "Hollywood" Hulk Hogan.

"Roddy Piper is a great man, probably the toughest guy I ever faced," Flair told me. "I have nothing but respect for the man. My plan to stop Hogan was derailed by my bum shoulder, and I hope Roddy can carry on. If he needs any help from me, in any way, shape, or form, he's got it. I'm stylin' and profilin' with Roddy Piper, and brother, it feels so good!"

Responded Piper: "Ric Flair was a tremendous credit to our sport when I was wrestling him, he's a tremendous credit to it now—hell, he'll always be good for wrestling. I was flattered when he offered to help me, and yes, Ric Flair is probably the toughest guy I ever faced, but 'Nature Boy,' stay out of it for right now. I got me a game plan, and 'Hollywood' Hogan will be history long before either of us!"

That's all for now. I'll see you at ringside! □



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#3: Jaeger van Dorn



#4: Bodybag Jones



#5: Wildfire Johnny Rage



#6: Eric Darkstrom



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#8: Derek Craven



#9: El Diablo Sanchez



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1. AIRPLANE SPIN
2. ARMBAR
3. ARMDRAG
4. ARMLOCK
5. ARM STRETCH
6. ARM WHIP
7. ASIAN SPIKE
8. BEAR HUG
9. BITING
10. BODY SLAM
11. BODY TACKLE
12. CHICKEN WING
13. CHOKE
14. CLAW
15. CLOTHESLINE
16. CROSS BODY BLOCK
17. DOUBLE AXEHANDLE
18. DROP KICK
19. EAGLE SPLIT
20. ELBOW SMASH
21. EYE GOUGE
22. FACE RAKE
23. FIREMAN'S CARRY RAM
24. FLYING BODY PRESS
25. FLYING CLOTHESLINE
26. FLYING DROP KICK
27. FLYING ELBOW DROP
28. FLYING HEAD BUTT
29. FLYING MARE
30. FOREARM SMASH
31. FOREIGN OBJECT
32. FULL NELSON
33. GIANT SWING
34. GRAPEVINE
35. HAIR PULLING
36. HAMMERLOCK
37. HEAD LOCK
38. HEAD STOMP
39. HEART PUNCH
40. HIP ROLL
41. IRISH WHIP
42. KNEE DROP
43. LEGLOCK
44. MANAGER INTERFERENCE
45. MONKEY FLIP
46. OVERHEAD TOSS
47. POLE RAM
48. REVERSE CHINLOCK
49. ROLLING SCISSORS
50. ROPE BURN
51. SAVATE KICK
52. SCISSORS GRIP
53. SHOULDER BREAKER
54. SLINGSHOT
55. SNAP MARE
56. STEP-OVER TOE HOLD
57. SUPLEX
58. SURFBOARD
59. TURNBUCKLE SMASH
60. WRISTLOCK

SET-UP HOLDS

61. ABDOMINAL STRETCH
62. ATOMIC DROP
63. AVALANCHE
64. BACKBREAKER
65. BACKROLL PRESS
66. BELLY TO BELLY
67. BIG SPLASH
68. BOSTON CRAB
69. BRAIN BUSTER
70. BULLDOG
71. CAMEL CLUTCH
72. COBRA CLUTCH
73. CRADLE
74. CRUCIFIX
75. DDT
76. FIGURE FOUR
77. FLYING LEG DROP
78. GOURD BUSTER
79. INDIAN DEATH LOCK
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81. PILEDRIVER
82. POWER BOMB
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90. SUPERPLEX

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WRESTLER'S NAME (NO ACTUAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES, PLEASE) _____

WRESTLER'S HEIGHT _____

WRESTLER'S WEIGHT _____

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MANAGER'S NAME (IF NOT YOU) _____

Wear-Down Holds: Choose 10 from the list of 60 shown at left. List them in the order to be used. Use each hold only once

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____
6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

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1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

Finishing Hold: Create your custom final maneuver or choose a hold from the 90 shown. Limit the length to 20 letters and spaces

FINISHING HOLD _____

Opponents: Check the numbers of the men you want your wrestler to go against from the 10 at the top. Remember to enclose \$1⁰⁰ for each.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

FROM THE DESK OF...

Stuart M. Saks

DURING THE PAST few months, a lot of people have either called or written to me with a similar question. It goes something like, "Stu, do you like Eric Bischoff?" I had received so many of these letters and phone calls that I started to become a little unsure of myself,

wondering if maybe PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED and its sister publications had revealed bias of some kind.

Then I realized that for the past 17 years, many people have been asking me a similar question about a different federation head. It goes something like, "Stu, do you like Vince McMahon?"

Well, if I've learned anything from veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock, it's that when people think you're being biased against both sides, you're probably doing your job well. And if the truth must be known, yes, I like Eric Bischoff, and yes, I like Vince McMahon, although neither of them has ever received an invitation to our company

Christmas party (nor has either sent one to their Christmas party).

As the publisher of the largest family of wrestling magazines in the world, I feel it's important for me to separate my duties as a publisher from my feelings as an everyday civilian. It didn't much matter what I thought about McMahon deregionalizing wrestling 13 years ago, nor does it matter what I think about Bischoff using his powers as senior vice president of WCW to create what he hopes will be a larger and stronger organization, the New World Order. The only thing that's important is for this magazine to accurately report the facts and events as they happen so that you, the reader, can be fully informed and make your own judgments.

One reader wrote, "I know you have to be an unbiased journalist, but when Roddy Piper was kicking Eric Bischoff on *Nitro* that

night, didn't you feel like he was kicking Bischoff for all of us? Didn't you feel like *you* were kicking Bischoff?"

Actually, I didn't. A lot of despicable figures have made their presence known in wrestling over the past two decades, and some of them have been guilty of actions far more heinous than Bischoff's. How about when Andre the Giant turned against Hulk Hogan, or when Sgt. Slaughter, the former Marine drill sergeant loved by fans, turned against his fans in the midst of the Persian Gulf War? How about when Hogan joined the NWO, thereby snubbing the millions of fans who made him a millionaire many times over? Or when Eddie Gilbert turned against his father? What has Bischoff done that nobody has done in the past?



Until recently, WCW Senior Vice President Eric Bischoff looked out only for the best interests of WCW, but now he's a member of the NWO. Stu Saks says we shouldn't be so quick to come down hard on Bischoff.



If you've been following wrestling since the beginning of the decade, you'll remember the outrage we all felt when Sgt. Slaughter became an Iraqi sympathizer during the Persian Gulf War. Now *that* was heinous.

I'm not excusing Bischoff's actions, but merely trying to place them in the proper perspective. Lawyers who make a lot more money than I do will eventually decide whether Bischoff has the right to work for the NWO while also working for WCW. I'm sure Ted Turner already has his attorneys looking into the situation. But Bischoff merely is, like everybody else in wrestling, a person doing his job and trying to make a living in the best way he knows how. In this sport, people go about achieving that in different ways.

As for Vince McMahon, let's put his actions in perspective, too. A dozen or so years ago, the wrestling world was outraged when McMahon wiped out the regional boundaries and spread the WWF's influence across the United States. Regional promoters

cried foul. But how about the millions of fans who, up until the 1980s, never had the opportunity to view a live WWF card? At the time, people thought McMahon was ruining wrestling. But isn't wrestling better off today as a whole than it was in 1980? Who would've ever dreamed that one day more than 100,000 people would watch a live wrestling card ... in Korea?

For years, wrestling had three major federations: the NWA, the WWF, and the AWA. The demise of the AWA left us with two. Bischoff says he's trying to turn the NWO into the most powerful wrestling organization in the world, with WCW as the second most powerful. Perhaps the result of Bischoff's actions will be a return to the three-federation system that worked so well for so long.

Over the past few months, Hogan has used strong-arm tactics in a failed attempt to get PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED to give his NWO its own editorial space. He demanded that we acknowledge the NWO as a separate federation, although, to the best of my knowledge, there's a WCW World championship but no NWO championship. As for the "world" designation, we'll decide that for ourselves if and when the time comes, based on established criteria. Bischoff has used his power and NWO friends to intimidate WCW wrestlers. Are their actions heinous? Probably. But how will this play out? Who knows? Maybe WCW will become a stronger federation, and maybe we'll have three strong federations.

I'm willing to watch, listen, and report. The way I see it, the NWO vs. WCW battle has reached a breaking point. Either the NWO takes over, or WCW resists. We'll find out within a matter of months.

Meanwhile, from a totally unbiased point of view, let's look at the ratings: They're up for WCW and holding steady for the WWF. By that measure, the NWO has been good for wrestling. And that'll be the final criterion by which this incredible period in wrestling history will be judged. □

in focus

By Dave Lenker

NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE

Seems like every time I leave the ECW Arena in Philadelphia, I do so shaking my head. Sometimes it's because I've seen or heard something truly amazing, and sometimes it's because I've seen or heard something truly ridiculous or even disgusting.

I prefer the amazing.

The most recent time it happened was December 7. Surprising everyone—including me—Beulah McGillicutty crossed that thin line between valet/manager and actual participant during a mixed tag team match that pitted McGillicutty and Tommy Dreamer against Francine and Shane Douglas.

McGillicutty, whose acrobatic technique had merely been the subject of adolescent boys' fantasies until then, executed a move that should always be remembered among ECW fans. I don't want to say it was this federation's version of Jimmy Snuka's famous "Superfly" leap from the top of a steel cage at Madison Square Garden in 1982, but I did think it was borderline incredible.

Forget for a moment that her name is Beulah. Bad name. Sounds like she should have either a mop or a flying broomstick in her hand. When I hear Beulah, I still think 6'3", 400 pounds, mustache, female.

McGillicutty. Doesn't do much for me, either. Makes me think of a circus clown.

Then put them together. Beulah McGillicutty. Her parents must have thought she was going to be fat and ugly, but they were wrong. Beulah McGillicutty is a gorgeous young woman.

But that's all she was in many people's minds until December 7. This was a no-holds-barred brawl and, although decent society says men aren't supposed to beat up on women, anything went, and Douglas didn't look the least bit apologetic when he pinned Beulah after executing a belly-to-belly suplex on her. In fact, he seemed to take a significant amount of glee in the act, as if he had just trashed the NWA belt all over again. That's Shane Douglas for you. He hates just about everyone.

The great moment, however, occurred earlier, when Beulah executed a picture-perfect moonsault onto Francine. *A valet executed a*



The most amazing move of the night at the December 7 ECW card in Philadelphia had to be Beulah McGillicutty's moonsault onto Francine. Will she ever be looked upon as just a pretty valet again?



Sunny is still every bit as beautiful as she has ever been, but Dave Lenker worries that she could soon be forgotten if she doesn't find someone to manage.

moonsault! Not a female wrestler, but a valet! The crowd was stunned. Francine was shocked. Sabu was probably smiling backstage if he saw it.

Now just about anyone can jump into a wrestling ring, throw a couple of punches and kicks, and say they wrestled. That's basically what I expected from Beulah McGillicutty, and I don't think anybody would've been surprised if she had executed no wrestling "move" more difficult than a hair pull. And perhaps Beulah's moonsault was a fluke. Maybe she got lucky, just once. But this moonsault was so perfect that you had to think she had been practicing.

"A lot," Beulah said. "No way I was gonna step into that ring and act like some blonde ditz. I wanted to prove something to Francine. If she's smart, she won't

be messing with me for a long time."

Maybe never again, or at least not until she builds a scientific repertoire of her own. Beulah McGillicutty struck the first blow, and she'll never again be gazed upon in the same way. At least not by these two eyes.

MESSAGE FOR SUNNY ...URGENT!

Way back when (way back in 1993, to be specific), Tammy Fytch was a desperate young female hoping to get her big break in wrestling. She kept knocking on doors and getting no answers. Those who answered the door quickly slammed it in her face. Finally, Smoky Mountain Wrestling's Brian Lee actually listened to what she was saying, then Chris Candido was so smitten by her that he put his career in her hands.

It was a good move on Candido's part, because Fytch knew the way to lead. She wasn't merely a pretty face, she was an intelligent, creative college graduate who idolized Hillary Rodham Clinton and did a pretty good job emulating her, too. Fytch made the move to the WWF, and Candido followed. She became Sunny. He became Skip. Sunny got a partner for Skip. Called him Zip. And Skip and Zip, The Bodydonnas, won the WWF World tag team title.

Since then, Sunny has jumped to the Godwinns and Smokin' Gunns, and those WWF tag team belts came with her. Finally, she jumped ship altogether and can be seen co-hosting *WWF Livewire*, making public appearances, showing up at WWF TV tapings to say a thing or two during broadcasts, but not doing much of anything in a managerial role.

She keeps saying she has her eyes on this guy and might offer a contract to that guy, but that's as far as it goes.

And that's too bad. Sunny's best asset (okay, one of her best assets) is her intelligence, her managerial ability. That distinct quality that enabled her to help Candido become a star. She singlehandedly turned the WWF tag team division on its ear last year and loved every minute of it.

Partly because she's beautiful, partly because she was successful, Sunny was one of the hottest commodities in wrestling, but I'm wondering how long Sunny fever will last. Sunny's no longer as hot as she once was, and she's in danger of being all but forgotten by the WWF community. She needs to take action, and that means getting back into full-time managing. If she does, she could one day rank as one of the all-time great managers. If she doesn't, she could turn into Missy Hyatt.

Sunny should remember how hard she worked for her first big break in wrestling. She was lucky. She got it. But most people don't get two great career breaks. If Sunny doesn't get her act together, her lament will be, "I could've been the first lady of wrestling." □

off the top

by Brandi Mankiewicz

*If you wish to
contribute to
Brandi's mailbag,
send your letters to:*

TOP ROPE
Box 1148
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Or send e-mail to:
TopRopePWI@aol.com

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

MY OH MY. What a response I have received since assuming this nefarious, formerly Ellner-held mantle. The e-mail, the snail mail, the phone calls. To paraphrase Sally Field after her second Oscar victory, "You hate me ... you really hate me."

The main concern that fans have raised relates to my claims to queendom. Well, folks, I have a forum to spew out my diatribes and you don't. I rule and you don't. So there. Long live Queen Brandi!

Since our mailman is probably ready to "go postal" due to the deluge of "OTR" mail, I have decided to set up an e-mail address for all of your questions. Now I realize that this might be hard on the crayon crowd, but so be it. Come into the '90s, you pale endomorphs. Or at least the late-'80s.

For those of you with access to a computer, send your "Top Rope" inquiries to TopRopePWI@aol.com.

Now, on with the third batch of mail, fully Brandi-fied. And remember to adore me, for I am your champion!

Dear Brandi:

Don't you wish the good-old days of wrestling would come back? We need Bruiser, Crusher, the Brisco brothers, and the Vachons back. I hate this new-age crap!

ROGER SCHULTZ
Atlanta, GA

Dear Roger:

Say no more. I know what you mean. While I may still be a young whipper-snapper, I, too, long for the days when nicotine-filled wrestling arenas would shorten your breath with a healthy dose of second-hand smoke. Wrestlers would enter the arenas with some 80-year-old broad screaming epithets with a voice that would make Suzanne Pleshette sound like a soprano. Yes; bring back the old-timers. One problem—they're either retired, past their prime, or no longer with us. Time to come out of that Camel-induced haze and live in the present, Roger-Dodger.

Dear Brandi:

What do you think of Eric Bischoff joining the NWO? I think it rules! They will now take over WCW once and for all.

EDDIE REEDER
Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Eddie:

"Pretty Boy" Bischoff joining the New World Order is a result of one of two scenarios. One, he's had the bejeezus scared out of him over the past few months and basically made friends with the bullies that were beating him up. Second, this is all part of a grand scheme to overthrow the NWO from the inside. I'm not sure. Bischoff is enjoying himself too much. Frankly, I'm in the minority in that I kind of like what he is doing, assuming he is sincere in his intentions. So what if WCW/NWA is a 100-year-old orga-



This picture of Bruiser wearing down Jack Brisco was taken just a few years after I was born! I'd like to see more wrestlers like them in the ring today. Not these wrestlers themselves, just guys like them!

nization steeped in tradition. The sun sets and rises every day. Change is inevitable. And the NWO has made WCW more interesting and watchable than it has been in years.

Dear Brandi:

What do you think will happen to Goldust? A year ago, he was the Intercontinental champion. Now he's

lost in the WWF shuffle. Will he stay, or will he go back to WCW as Dustin Rhodes?

ANGELA MASON
Yorba Linda, CA



Eric Bischoff got on my nerves when he was a pro-WCW broadcaster, but I have to admit that I like the way he's handling the NWO. This better not be part of some master plan.

Dear Angela,

I'm not sure if I don't care or I don't care. Goldust's act has worn very thin. What once was interesting is now boring. He won the I-C belt on a combination of talent and shock value. Now the shock has worn off and Goldust is struggling as a mid-carder. But if he were to revert to his old persona, I know I would come down with a nasty case of the yawns. What a quandary.



I give Goldust credit for having enough guts to do what he has done in the WWF, but enough is enough. Your time is over. But whatever you do, don't even think about using that old name of yours again.

He's boring with or without the gold face paint. Maybe if he put on weight and wore yellow polka dots and danced and ... nah, that would never work.

Dear Brandi:

Will Ric Flair *ever* come back? And if he doesn't, who will finally replace him in the Horsemen?

TODD NELSEN
Thief River Falls, MN

Dear Todd:

I prefer to remember a Ric Flair who has come back from all odds to win 12 world titles. I

think another stint on the shelf will only lessen the impact he has had. It's time, Ric. Be a manager or a broadcaster. It's not that you can't do it, but you shouldn't have to do it. Your place in history is secure. As far as the Horsemen go, I think they need young, vibrant, and muscular wrestlers to turn my head again. Mongo does nothing for me. Benoit's muscular physique and ring presence sweep me off my feet. Arn's nice, but in an uncle kind of way. They need beefcake, and I don't mean Brutus, or whatever the heck his name is today.

Dear Brandi:

You once said that a real man should be WWF champion. Now you have a real man, "Psycho" Sid. He's big, bad, and the fans love him. Plus, he's more of a role model than that male-stripper wannabe Shawn Michaels.

DARRELL TECHMAN
Lima, OH

Dear Darrell:

Role model? Okay, let's flesh that one out. A mentally unbalanced lunatic who can't think straight because of the voices in his head. You're right. I can see the merchandise sales now. Come get your "Psycho" Sid souvenir straitjackets! His championship victory struck a balance for nutcases everywhere. Screwballs rejoice! One of us is on top of the mountain wearing a title belt—not one made of gold, but one made of rubber so the freak doesn't hurt himself. Having said that, let



"Psycho" Sid a good role model? Are you out of your mind? It's nice that he's willing to beat up just about anyone who gets in his way, but, parents, don't let your kids grow up to be like him!

me also point out that anyone who can beat up that poor, yet diminutive excuse for a champion is all right in my book. Smile, Shawn, you're on Sid's camera. Or is it on you? Or that fossil of a manager of yours? □



P-R-E-S-E-N-T-S . . .

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A ROCKY ROAD AHEAD?

How much is too much? Rocky Maivia could someday turn out to be one of the all-time WWF greats. *Someday.* If the WWF expects him to be that now, it could ruin this young sensation's career!

The WWF Is Expecting Too Much Of Rocky Maivia

By Bryan Ethier

JUDGING BY THE way Sunny's big hazel eyes were popping out of their sockets, you'd think she was staring at a Polynesian diver emerging from the ocean bearing a rare black pearl between his ultrabright white teeth.

In reality, the manager/commentator/femme fatale was staring in delight at an olive-skinned wrestler who bears more than a passing resemblance to the type of suave Caribbean diver you'd find in





Hunter Hearst Helmsley seemed a tad surprised when Rocky Maivia caught him with this back-bodydrop at Survivor Series. It was an impressive WWF debut, sure, but let's not get carried away with our expectations for him.

everyone in the WWF seems to have gone gaga over this 6'4",

272-pound progeny of one of wrestling's most famous families. Maivia, the son of Rocky Johnson and grandson of Peter Maivia, has certainly evoked memories of his wrestling forefathers.

"He has the potential to go even farther than his father and grandfather, and they were great," assessed legendary manager Capt. Lou Albano.

It's hard to imagine a new wrestler entering the competitive WWF riding such a wave of expectations. Already he is being heralded—perhaps even groomed—as the WWF's next big superstar.

"He's still a young pup in a field of mature dogs," Sunny added during a rare lucid moment.

Therein lies the mystery of—and the fascination with—this upstart grappler: What *has* he done? Well, he has quickly impressed his fans and critics by combining outstanding power, good ring savvy, and some impressive acrobatics. Employing rapid-fire arm-drag takedowns, drop-kicks, and assorted high-flying moves, Maivia wowed fans at the Survivor

a Joseph Conrad tale.

"I'm very pleased—he's one yummy wrestling individual," Sunny swooned from the *Monday Night Raw* broadcasters' table.

As new sensation Rocky Maivia dazzled her and the New Haven, Connecticut, crowd with a stunning array of technical and aerial ma-

neuvers, fellow broadcasters Vince McMahon and Jerry Lawler screwed up their eyebrows in looks of dismay.

"Everyone certainly has their eyes on this WWF superstar," McMahon deadpanned, in one of the understatements of the year.

Like wistful, wide-eyed Sunny,

Series when he pinned Crush and Goldust in succession during an eight-man elimination match.

The following night at *Raw*, he rendered Sunny and crew foggy-eyed by easily disposing of Salvatore Sincere.

"I think two factors have contributed to his immediate populari-

Maivia won his team's Survivor Series match when he pinned Goldust following a shoulderbreaker. But just because he pinned a former Intercontinental champion doesn't mean he's ready for shots at the I-C title.



some confidence. I don't care how much raw skill you have."

How good is Maivia? After two WWF matches, it was tough to tell. And making ends meet in the USWA is a far cry from conquering the far more competitive WWF. Maivia might have the strength to go toe-to-toe with Sid and Vader and the other gargantuans, but does he have the seasoning? Is he like the gifted running back who leaves college after one spectacular season only to discov-

For a while, Maivia was double-teamed by Crush and Goldust at Survivor Series. It appears the WWF thinks he is ready to handle stars like these on a regular basis. The federation had better be careful with Maivia, or his career could be ruined.



ty," explained broadcaster Kevin Kelly. "First, he is a tremendously talented, charismatic, and exciting wrestler. Fans are always hungry for a popular guy who can also wrestle. Maivia fits that bill. Also, because of his bloodlines, everyone expects him to be a superstar, just like his father and grandfather. He is in a no-lose situation."

A former USWA tag team champ and lineman on the University of Miami football team, Maivia can only lose, if he, well, loses. A lot. And chances are that

will only happen if he is thrown into the ring with men he can't be expected to handle at this stage of his career.

"I'm not sure Rocky will pay his dues in the usual way," said Barry Windham, another second-generation star. "He should be going against guys with a similar style until he gets real comfortable in there. He's good now, but everybody needs a little experience in order to get

er he's not quite ready to be a star in the NFL?

Just days after Survivor Series, he was pitted against Vader on a card in Canada. He wrestled courageously and never gave up

(Continued on page 56)



Ric Flair confers with Jeff Jarrett before a big match. The "Nature Boy" is 100 percent behind Jarrett and would like to bring him into the fold of The Four Horsemen, but the other three members of the group are against the idea.

JEFF JARRETT

WHEN JEFF JARRETT walked out of a limousine on **WCW Monday Nitro** in October, the assumption was that he was the latest to join the New World Order. But Jarrett surprised everyone in an interview after his first WCW match. He blasted Hulk Hogan and pledged his allegiance to WCW.

Jeff Jarrett owes his career to the wrestling history that he embraces. A second-generation star and son of Jerry Jarrett, the former USWA superstar cut his wrestling teeth in the rough rings of Memphis.

Jarrett, however, enjoyed his greatest success in the WWF. The flamboyant "Double-J" entered the federation determined to use wrestling to further his career as a country music crooner. The music career never came to fruition, but Jarrett did win three WWF Intercontinental titles.

Nagging injuries and a swirling lip-synching controversy led to Jarrett's departure from the WWF. He returned to his roots in Tennessee and enjoyed further success in the singles and tag team ranks. Then the NWO rumors started, but Jarrett quickly put them to rest.

Recently, Jarrett has caught the eye of Ric Flair. Despite protests from his fellow Horsemen, Flair has taken Jarrett under his wing ... and taught him a thing or two about strutting.

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker, Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz, and Senior Writer Steve Anderson sat down with Jarrett after a recent **Nitro**. He candidly spoke about his past in the USWA and WWF, and his present and future as one of WCW's leaders in the war with the NWO. He also took time to acknowledge Ric Flair's contributions to his career.

STEVE ANDERSON: Thanks for taking the time to meet with us today, Jeff.

JEFF JARRETT: It's my pleasure.

DAVE LENKER: First of all, how is the Jeff Jarrett in WCW different from the old "Double-J" in the WWF?

JARRETT: I guess you could say that I have rediscovered my roots. It took someone like Hulk Hogan to make me realize what my career is about—history. I'm just continuing the Jarrett legacy.

BRANDI MANKIEWICZ: But isn't Hulk Hogan a major part of wrestling history as well?

“We are just not united. The guys in the NWO are always backing each other up ... I'm not saying that we all have to be buddies, but we at least need to be focused on getting rid of the NWO.”

JARRETT: Brandi, Hulk Hogan has done a lot for professional wrestling. There's no denying that. But for him to say that without him, wrestling wouldn't be what it is is just plain wrong. Hogan didn't put any food on the Jarrett table. We did it all in spite of him, not because of him.

ANDERSON: So what is your main issue with Hogan and the NWO?

JARRETT: Hogan and his band of thugs are trying to crush a wrestling promotion that goes back almost an entire century. The NWO doesn't want to just take over, they want to erase all the great things that have happened in the past, and that's wrong.

LENKER: So why does Jeff Jarrett step up and try to become a leader in this battle?

JARRETT: Why? Because no one else will. Most of the WCW wrestlers are too busy fighting amongst themselves. And then there's Sting. He's all upset over everyone thinking he joined the NWO. I saw the video of the fake Sting. It fooled me. He should understand that, especially with the situation the way it is right now.

MANKIEWICZ: But Sting walks on neutral ground. He's a free agent, away from the influences of WCW and the NWO. At least that's what we're supposed to believe. Why take issue with someone who's above the fray?

JARRETT: If he's not on anybody's side, why is he lurking in the shadows of all the WCW arenas? Why is he attacking me and everyone else in WCW? Why doesn't he go after the NWO, too? There are so many questions, but no one can confront him. He's too busy running or hiding or lurking in the shadows.

ANDERSON: If Sting came back and pledged his allegiance to WCW tomorrow, would you and others welcome him back with no questions asked?

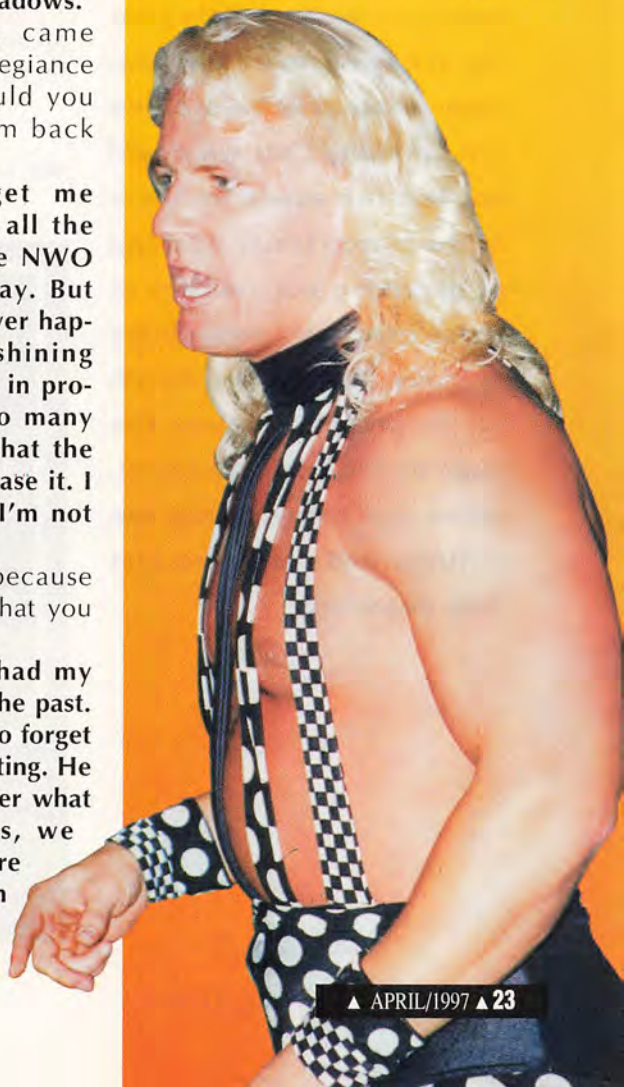
JARRETT: Don't get me wrong, Steve. We need all the help we can get with the NWO getting stronger every day. But I'm not sure if that will ever happen. Sting has been a shining example for what is good in professional wrestling for so many years. I'd hate to think that the past few months would erase it. I guess my answer is that I'm not sure.

ANDERSON: Is that because he attacked you, or is it that you just don't trust him?

JARRETT: Look, I've had my share of dirty dealings in the past. But you're right. It's hard to forget those reverse DDTs from Sting. He cost me matches. No matter what his eventual decision is, we might have ourselves a score to settle somewhere down the road.

(Continued on page 60)

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.



THE UNOFFICIAL OFFICIAL AWARDS

The Best Of The Rest

The "Unofficial Official" Awards have become a grand tradition in our year-end issue and always seem to elicit the most response from our readers. This year we received more submissions than ever before. We got so many that we could not find the space for them in the March issue. Instead of depriving our readers of these great and sometimes dubious awards, we decided to present to you the best of the rest. As usual, some are funny, some are cutting, and some are just duly deserved.

A Breath Of Fresh Air: Ahmed Johnson and Rey Misterio Jr.

—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

A Breath Of Stagnant Air: Virgil resurfaces as Vincent, Ted DiBiase's bodyguard

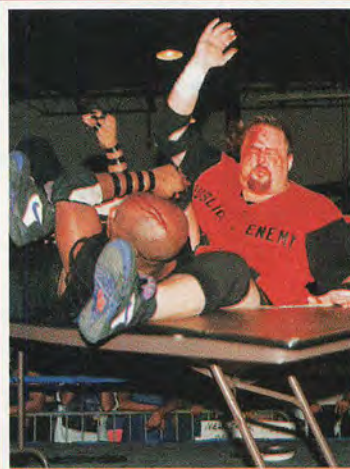
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

Always Imitated, But Never Duplicated: Ric Flair

—Scott Murphy, NY

Best Face Paint: Sting's "Crow" look

—Tim Dobronsk, Ocean City, MD



Best Song Lyric Stolen From PWI: "Watching Johnny Grunge legdrop New Jack through a press table," from Weezer's "El Scorcho" and PWI's February 1996 issue, page 25

—Dave Callahan, Ann Arbor, MI



Biggest Disappointment Of The Election Year: Bob Backlund fails to garner a single electoral vote ... or any vote, for that matter

—Dave Callahan, Ann Arbor, MI

Best Finishing Maneuver (Tie): "Diamond" Dallas Page's "Diamond Cutter" & Hunter Hearst Helmsley's "Pedigree"

—Michael & Jennifer Lakowicz, Milwaukee, WI

Best New TV Concept: *Livewire*

—Jimmy Sydnor, Williamstown, KY

Best Thing To Happen To WCW Broadcasting: Steve McMichael joins The Four Horsemen

—Michael Weyer, Oakbrook, IL

Best Use Of Another Wrestler: Kevin Nash using Rey Misterio Jr. as a lawn dart

—Faye Upton, Paignton, England

Better Change His Name to Switzerland: Sting not being part of NWO or WCW

—Lori Munro, Fort Covington, NY

Better Off On The Sidelines: Steve McMichael

—Lori Munro, Fort Covington, NY

Biggest Capacity For Hiding Cans Of Spray Paint In His Tights: Hulk Hogan

—Faye Upton, Paignton, England

Biggest Disappointment In Wrestling In 1996: Animal returning to WCW to team with Hawk, only to leave after a few months

—Jason Beaumier, East Greenwich, RI

Biggest Question Of Next Year: Who shot J.R.?

—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL

Cheapest Attempt To Try To Get Viewers: The WWF's "Bikini Blast Off" before SummerSlam

—Jason Beaumier, East Greenwich, RI

Coollest Laugh Since Jim Neidhart: John Kronus

—Steve Cook, Franklin, OH

Daftest Bodily Adornment: Shawn Michaels' pierced bellybutton

—Faye Upton, Paignton, England

Danny Davis 10 Years Later: Nick Patrick

—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL



Dick Murdoch Memorial "Will Bleed For Beer" Award: The Sandman

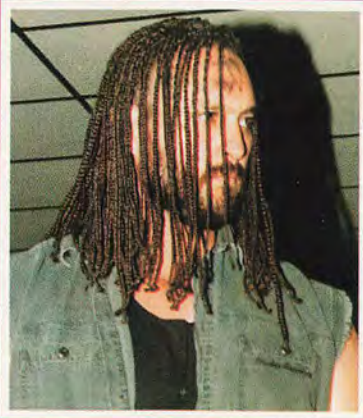
—Matt Terry, Los Angeles, CA

Disco Disaster: Disco Inferno

—Michael Webb, McHenry, IL

Extreme Doesn't Even Describe It Anymore: ECW's entire year

—Steve Cook, Franklin, OH



Hawaiian Punch: Crush

—Kyle McGowan, Worcester, MA

Four Matches And A Funeral: In Your House XI: Buried Alive

—Kelly Blankenship, Decaturville, IN

From Man Without A Name To A Man Without A Place To Wrestle: Brutus Beefcake

—Jason Beamier, East Greenwich, RI

From Yellow (Like A Chicken) To Black And White (Like A Skunk): "Hollywood" Hulk Hogan

—Scott Johnson, Persque Isle, ME

Greatest Moment Of The Year: Sandman spits beer on Savio Vega

—Jimmy Sydnor, Williamstown, KY

Greatest Moment Of The Year II: Randy Savage pulls Hulk Hogan's hairpiece off at Halloween Havoc

—Jimmy Sydnor, Williamstown, KY

He Just Won't Die Award: The Undertaker

—Michael Webb, McHenry, IL

He's Definitely Violent ... I Just Wish She'd Be Silent: Chris Benoit and Woman

—Michael & Jennifer Lakowicz, Milwaukee, WI

His Biography Should Be Written By Stephen King: Steve Austin

—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

Don't Think We Will See Him Attending Any Syracuse Orangemen Home Games This Year: Shawn Michaels

—Dan Meyer, Hamburg, NY

Don't Understand It—None Of My 1986 Super Bowl Champion Chicago Bear Teammates Will Talk To Me Anymore: Steve McMichael

—Dan Meyer, Hamburg, NY

I Hate To Say We Told You So, But ...: The USWA discovers the real Jerry "The King" Lawler

—Jim Lee, North Haven, CT

I'm Whining And I Can't Shut Up: Jim Ross

—Scott Murphy, New York, NY

Is There Anything He Won't Do?: Sabu

—Scott Murphy, New York, NY

It's Not KFC, But It's Finger-Lickin' Good: Mankind's mandible clawhold

—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL

It's Trying To Grow: Skip's hair

—Rochelle Pahl, Salem, OR

I Wanna Be Vince McMahon: Eric Bischoff

—Keith Brooks, Palmdale, CA

I Wish I Invested In Tables: Public Enemy

—Ben Barlow, Phoenix, AZ

Jack Tunney Would Have Fired Him By Now: Nick Patrick

—Michael Weyer, Oakbrook, IL

Jenny McCarthy Award For Most Annoying Beautiful Blonde Bimbo: Sunny

—Jim Lee, North Haven, CT



If He's Using His Real Name, Why Does He Still Use The Fake Accent?: Scott Hall

—Jim Lee, North Haven, CT



Missing Menendez Brother: Raven
—Jim Lee, North Haven, CT

Johnny B. Fooled: "Wildman" Marc Mero
—Jimmy Sydnor, Williamstown, KY

Just Give Me An Award So PWI Will Have An Excuse To Put A Picture Of Me In This Issue: Sunny
—Dan Meyer, Hamburg, NY

Mad Cow Disease Affects Human!: Mankind
—Lori Munro, Ft Covington NY

Makes More Comebacks Than The Brady Bunch: "Rowdy" Roddy Piper
—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL

More Names Than A Phone Book: John Tenta
—Jason Beaumier, East Greenwich, RI

Most Likely To Put His Father In A Rest Home Seen On 60 Minutes: Tyler Fullington
—Jack Dolson, Victoria, British Columbia

Most Pathetic Statement Used: Eric Bischoff saying, "We have more security here than Fort Knox," even when we all know the NWO will find a way to get in and attack whenever they want
—Jason Beaumier, East Greenwich, RI

National Rifle Association Spokesman: Brian Pillman
—Michael & Jennifer Lakowicz, Milwaukee, WI

Never Met A Man He Didn't Like Award: Goldust
—Michael Webb, McHenry, IL

Not ECW, But Better Than WCW Uncensored: WWF's specialty matches
—Michael Weyer, Oakbrook, IL

Now It Is Truly Royal Once Again: The Royal Rumble (for returning to the two-minute intermission between wrestlers' entrances)
—Jimmy Sydnor, Williamstown, KY

NWO: Nobody Wrestles Over here
—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL

Out Of Ammo: The Smokin' Gunns
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

Professional Wrestling's Timex Award: Sabu
—Jason Gohde, Peoria, IL

P.T. Barnum "There's A Sucker Born Every Minute" Award: Marc Mero, for falling for Curt Hennig's "Perfect Hoax"
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

Rebel Without A Clue: Jeff Jarrett
—Jeffrey L. Smolka, Minot AFB, ND

Rey Misterio Jr.'s Stomach Has More Depth: WWF's tag team roster
—Jim Lee, North Haven, CT



Professional Wrestling's Urkel: Leif Cassidy
—Jason Gohde, Peoria, IL



So Ugly He Scares His Own Shadow: Mankind
—Michael Webb, McHenry, IL

Richard Bey's Dream Guests: Goldust & Marlena
—Tim Dobronsk, Ocean City, MD

Riches To Rags To Riches: "Diamond" Dallas Page
—Scott Murphy, New York, NY

RIP: Hulkamania, January 24, 1984-July 7, 1996
—Michael Weyer, Oakbrook, IL

Santa's Got Muscles, But No Heart: Hulk Hogan
—Luke Nielsen, Edmonton, Alberta

Scream In Their Ear And You Can Hear The Echo: Marty Jannetty and Leif Cassidy
—Rochelle Pahl, Salem, OR

She Blinded Him With Something, But It Wasn't Science: Phineas Godwinn's infatuation with Sunny
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

She'd Look Sexy In A Garbage Bag Award: Sunny
—Scott Johnson, Presque Isle, ME

Slipup Of The Year: Hulk Hogan saying "The Kid" instead of "Six" when he wanted to talk about "The 1-2-3 Kid" on a live Nitro
—Yan O'Cain, Mont-Saint Gregoire, Quebec

Snap Into A Losing Streak: Randy Savage
—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL

Speak Loudly & Carry A Big Gun: Brian Pillman
—Martin Vann, McHenry, IL

Strangest Male Pattern Baldness I've Ever Seen: Mankind
—Patrick Patterson, Garland, TX

The Censor's Nightmare Award (Tie): Steve Austin & Brian Pillman
—Scott Johnson, Presque Isle, ME

The Cockroach That Never Goes Away: Hacksaw Duggan
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

The Great White Maybe: Dan Severn in either WCW or WWF
—Jason Gohde, Peoria, IL

The Perfect Tag Team: Goldust & Dennis Rodman
—Jason Showve, Des Moines, IA

There Goes The Neighborhood: Steve Austin
—Erich Mausser, Independence, OH

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers Award For Worst Collection Of Talent: The WWF tag team division
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL



That Camouflage Really Worked! I Hardly Noticed Him: "The Stalker" Barry Windham
—Jason Showve, Des Moines, IA

This Is Harder Than Weightlifting: Mark Henry
—Scott Murphy, New York, NY

Ugh! I'm Blind—He's In Spandex: Jim Cornette
—Ben Barlow, Phoenix, AZ

Was That Clubberin' Or Clobberin'?: Dusty Rhodes
—Lisa Jaschinski, Unionville, CT

WCW Strategies: Old WWF Videotapes
—Yan O'Gain, Mont-Saint Gregoire, Quebec



Who's Got The Gold?: Sunny
—Lisa Jaschinski, Unionville, CT

We Make Them, You Take Them: WCW taking WWF wrestlers
—Scott Murphy, New York, NY

What ... Again?: A fake Sting enters WCW
—Jimmy Sydnor, Williamstown, KY

What's A Girl Like You Doing With A Girl Like Him?: Goldust's "director," Marlena
—Jim Lee, North Haven, CT

What The Hell Is That?: Mankind
—Ben Barlow, Phoenix, AZ

While You're At It, Throw Bob Holly In There!: The "Buried Alive" match at In Your House XI
—Patrick Patterson, Garland, TX



Wrestling Coolest Superhero: Super Nova
—Scott Lenkler, Bricktown, NY

Worst Cheap Shot Of All-Time: Shane Douglas grabs Pit Bull I by his halo brace and yanks him around by it
—Steve Cook, Franklin, OH

Worst Security: WCW Monday Nitro at Disney/MGM Studios
—Michael & Jennifer Lakowicz, Milwaukee, WI

Worst Wrestler Stolen From A Video Game: Glacier
—Dave Callahan, Ann Arbor, MI

Worst Wrestling Federation Since Herb Abrams' UWF: The NWO
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

Would You Just Shut Up About The NWO Already?! Eric Bischoff
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

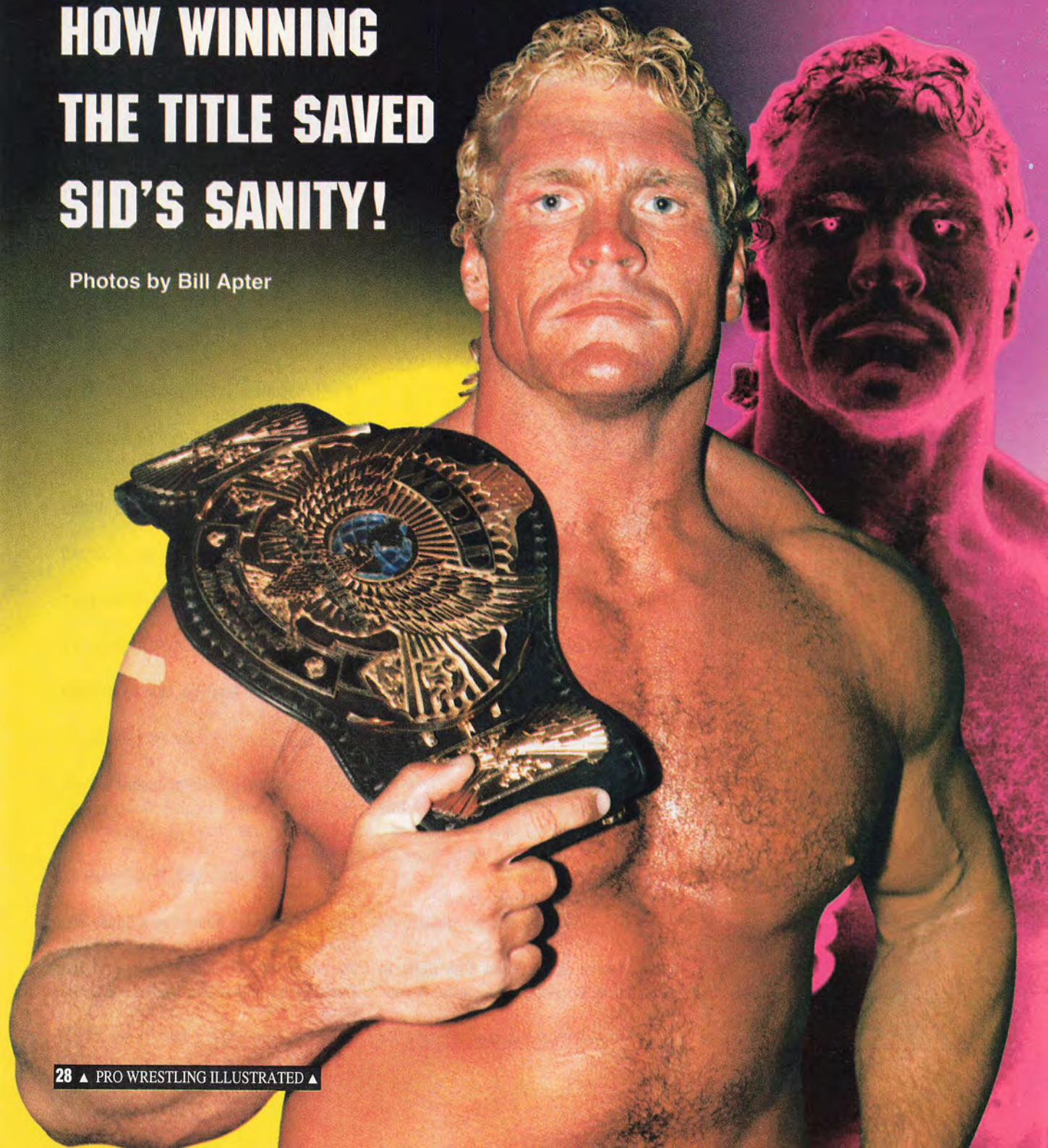
Yeah, This'll Really Help Quebec's Push For Independence: Jacques Rougeau and Karl Oulette resurface as The Amazing French-Canadians
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL

You Don't Tug On Superman's Cape, You Don't Spit Into The Wind, You Don't Pull The Mask Off The Lone Ranger, And You Don't Turn Against The Undertaker: Paul Bearer
—Justin Lollie, Port Richey, FL □

A VICIOUS CYCLE COMPLETED!

HOW WINNING
THE TITLE SAVED
SID'S SANITY!

Photos by Bill Apter



**HOW MANY TIMES HAS HE BEEN
BLASTED FOR HIS INABILITY TO COME
THROUGH WHEN SO MUCH IS AT
STAKE? YES, IT ATE AT HIM. BUT NOW
THAT HE HAS WON HIS FIRST WORLD
TITLE, HE CAN FINALLY REST EASY
KNOWING THAT HE IS A WINNER**

By Bryan Ethier

MONTHS LATER, THE image is still numbing. "Psycho" Sid plunged atop a prone Shawn Michaels. A groggy Dave Hebner making the three-count. Jose Lothario lying on the arena floor, suffering from shock, chest pains, and an injured soul.

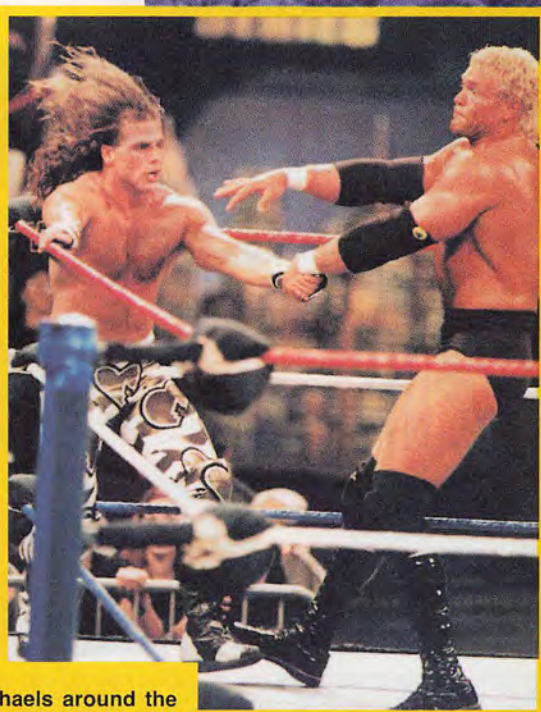
It is almost impossible to envision "Psycho" Sid, the vicious one, the perennially failing one, with the WWF World title belt around his waist. Particularly when the championship came at the expense of one of the most talented and popular wrestlers in WWF history, "The Heartbreak Kid."

But envision Sid as a champ, we must. Reality forces us to.

We will always close our eyes and see Sid at the infamous Survivor Series match with Michaels ... see him clanking Michaels with a TV camera while Shawn's venerable manager lay barely conscious just a few feet away.

One can come to grips with Sid using underhanded tactics to win the championship. Throughout his career, Sid has turned against his friends. Shawn was just the latest in a series.

Sid returned to the WWF last year after being sidelined for months with a serious neck injury (he had actually announced his retirement). In fact, it



Sid whipped Michaels around the ring mercilessly (above) and stomped him (below) at Survivor Series. The end result? He became WWF World champion. And that could do wonders for his psyche.





Sid could have taken a powder when Shawn took over on offense with a bodyslam (above) and a flying forearm smash (below). He didn't, though. He persevered, and it paid off. Is this a new "Psycho" Sid?



seemed doubtful that Sid would ever return to the ring. But return he did, taking the place of the deposed Ultimate Warrior.

Amazingly, Sid returned to a hero's welcome from his fans. He feuded bitterly with Big Van Vader, Davey Boy Smith, and other WWF rulebreakers. He and Michaels mended their ways and teamed on numerous occasions.

Sid, it seemed, had changed.

Or so WWF fans thought. During the Survivor Series match with Michaels, he once again proved that his true colors are black and blue.

So it comes as no surprise that on November 17, the day after Survivor Series, a lot of WWF fans woke up knowing they did not have an ambassador to represent their federation.

"I was shocked when Sid won," a long-time WWF matchmaker lamented after Survivor Series. "He earned that title shot, sure, but I didn't think he could come through. I shudder to think what direction the WWF is headed now that he reached the top. Shawn was self-centered and brash, but he was always upbeat and positive. Sid is not the greatest role model for today's youth."

Throughout his 10-year career, the 6'8", 318-pound psychotic behemoth has been groomed to be a champion. He was once called the next Hulk Hogan. Like ex-WWF kingpin Kevin "Diesel" Nash, Sid combines frightening raw power with an unquenchable thirst for hurt-

ing his opponents.

But unlike Nash, Sid has historically been anything but *cool*, particularly under pressure. As the saying goes, "When the lights get bright, Sid goes on the lamb."

Sid's biggest win prior to Survivor Series came in 1994, when he beat Jerry Lawler for the USWA championship. But his reign was not spectacular. He relied on outside interference to beat foes he should have had no trouble handling on his own. He lacked self-discipline and the ability to adapt to the styles of more seasoned technical wrestlers.

"I've wrestled Sid many times," said Jerry Lawler, "and he's a very volatile guy. That can be good or bad. It's great to have a passion to hurt another man; it's bad if you want to hurt your tag team partner or the man you are protecting. Of course I don't mind seeing Shawn Michaels writhe in pain. Sid's basic problem is you can't count on him."

Sid's inconsistency has naturally affected his ego, which vacillates between that of a king and that of a vulnerable, uncertain pre-teen. Doubtless, his inability to fulfill his destiny has tormented him, particularly over the last five years. He seemed destined to rule

WCW once, but he never was able to win the big match. When it came time to train, learn new moves, or plan strategy, Sid too often was nowhere to be found.

During his first tour with the WWF, he seemed ready to challenge for the title. But then he disappeared.

Patient, he has not been.

"If you want to compete at the highest level and stay there, it takes strong commitment," Bret Hart said. "Natural talent will take you a long way, but you can't get to the top and stay there without making a commitment to stick with your goals. I don't think Sid was willing to make that kind of commitment for a very long time, and that's what caused him so many problems."

Such evaluations have piqued Sid in the past, and there's no question he rode an emotional rollercoaster from win to loss to win.

And that's why his victory over Michaels was so important to Sid's career, and to his self-esteem. He can step off the emotional ride to psyche purgatory. That glittering gold WWF belt gave him a new identity; wearing it bound his soul, allowed him to look at himself in the mirror and smile.

Now that Sid has won a world title, will he change? Become more dependable, stable? Transform himself into a worthy WWF leader? Will we see a more consistent Sid sitting atop the WWF throughout the next year?

Two scenarios will likely present themselves over the next few months. First, by winning the title, he has finally come to grips with his own failures. He can put the past behind him and know he is a winner. Or, second, he can lose perspective on his success and blow it all by repeating the destructive habits that have sabotaged his career to date.

Ultimately there's no way of predicting the future of a fickle fiend such as Sid. In fact, as the weeks pass, the image of him bearing the championship belt grows dimmer and dimmer. □



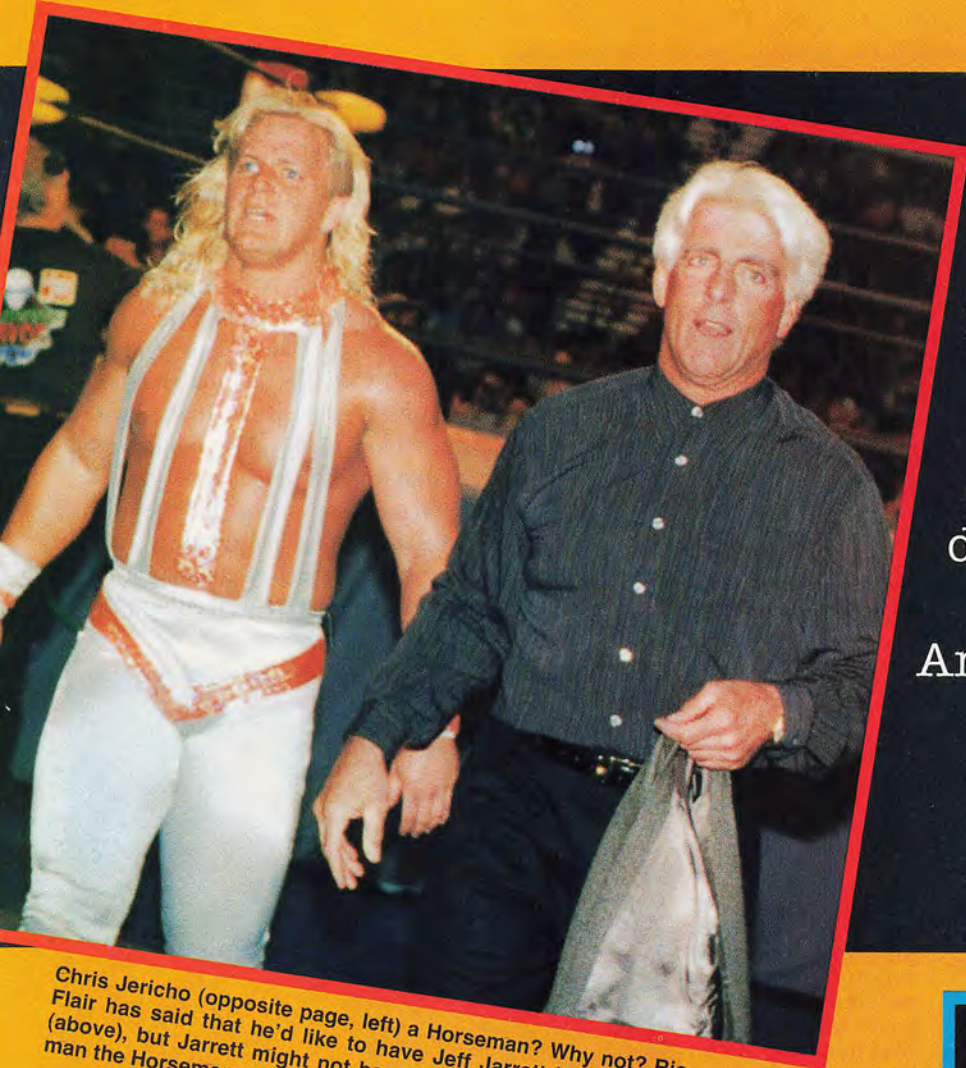
The end of the match saw Sid seize a TV camera (above) and use it on both Michaels and Jose Lothario. Seconds later, he finished Michaels with a power bomb (below). Some called it an underhanded way to win a title, but it was something Sid felt compelled to do.



EXCLUSIVE!

**THE
MAN
TO
REPLACE
THE
MAN!**

**The Horsemen's
Choice Will
Shock You!**



Chris Jericho (opposite page, left) a Horseman? Why not? Ric Flair has said that he'd like to have Jeff Jarrett in the group (above), but Jarrett might not be as trustworthy as Jericho, a man the Horsemen could mold in their image.

WANTED:
a youngstar to
fill in for (and
perhaps replace!)
a legend. Must
have talent,
charisma, and a
desire to succeed
at all costs.
Anyone interested
should apply to
the Horsemen.
Lion hearts
preferred

By Steve Anderson

WHEN RIC FLAIR'S shoulder went out in Japan this fall and needed to be surgically repaired, a great wrestling career was put in jeopardy. With that, the future of The Four Horsemen was automatically in danger as well.

Without any one member of the quartet, the Horsemen are not at full force. Without Flair, they lack a foundation. They lack a soul. Since 1986, Flair has been the guiding force behind the supergroup. No version of the clique could possibly exist without the "Nature Boy." Well, at least not until he retires ... for real.

"Ric is the lifeblood of the Horsemen, no question about it," said Arn Anderson. "His track record and

his presence are what make us elite in professional wrestling."

Ole Anderson was replaceable. So were Lex Luger and Sting. The Horsemen have done just fine, thank you, without Barry Windham, Sid Vicious, Brian Pillman, and even Paul Roma. But Flair? While he still can provide emotional support, he cannot carry his weight physically at this point. So the Horsemen need to think about doing the unthinkable. They need to look for a replacement for him.

Jeff Jarrett was once a candidate, seemingly anointed by the "Nature Boy" himself. But no one man, not even Flair, determines the destiny of the group without the input of the others. The other three vetoed the idea after much consideration. Anderson



Jericho is one of the most promising young stars to enter WCW in years. He has extensive international experience and is a good technical and aerial wrestler. He and Chris Benoit could lead the Horsemen into the next century.



When you get caught in the Horsemen corner during a tag team match, you know you're in big, big trouble. Soon Jericho could be assisting in these double-, triple-, and quadruple-team efforts.

does not trust him. Chris Benoit claims that he lacks killer instinct. Steve McMichael simply does not see what Jarrett could add.

But now one other name has surfaced. It's a name that might shock you, but an individual who could possibly fill the Horsemen shoes of Ric Flair. Meet potential Horseman Chris Jericho!

At this point, Jericho is about as far removed from Horseman material as anyone. He is a scientific, high-flying wrestler who drinks in the cheers of

Both Squire David Taylor (below) and Six (right) know how tough Jericho can be, but the one major knock against him is that he is too nice. Give the Horsemen a little time and they could change that.



the fans. He is hungry for success while being humbled by it at the same time. He's not the least bit nasty. In fact, Jericho seems more likely to be sneak-attacked by the Horsemen than recruited.

According to reliable sources, though, Benoit is lobbying for the recruitment of Jericho. He has followed "Lion Heart's" career in Japan and in ECW. He saw the enthusiasm. He saw the charisma. In essence, he saw a lump of clay that could be molded into fine Horsemen pottery.

Benoit knows what its like to enter a big federation and try to work your way up the ladder of contention. More than a year ago, he walked into WCW

after successful stints in Japan and ECW. He wanted to prove that he could replicate his prior success under WCW's bright lights. When the Horsemen came calling, Benoit asked, "Where do I sign?"

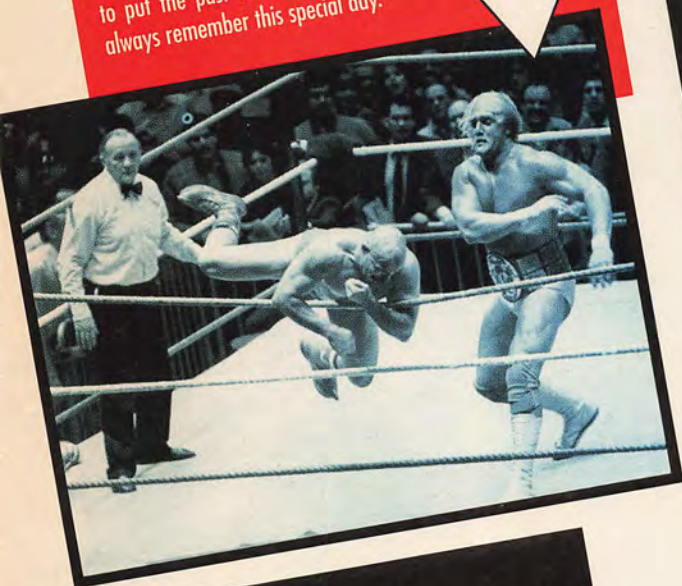
"Not many men are called to be a Horseman," Benoit said. "When they ask, you respond. You say yes. Greatness is immediately bestowed upon you."

But the other Horsemen reportedly do not yet share Benoit's enthusiasm toward Jericho. Flair was counting on

(Continued on page 58)

GREATEST MATCH

vs. The Iron Sheik, January 23, 1984. He may have captured one world title since turning rulebreaker, but the first one remains the sweetest. In one of the most memorable matches of all-time, he pinned Sheik in front of a raucous sellout crowd at Madison Square Garden, and "Hulkamania" was born. "Hollywood" Hogan says he'd like to put the past behind him, but we have a feeling he'll always remember this special day.



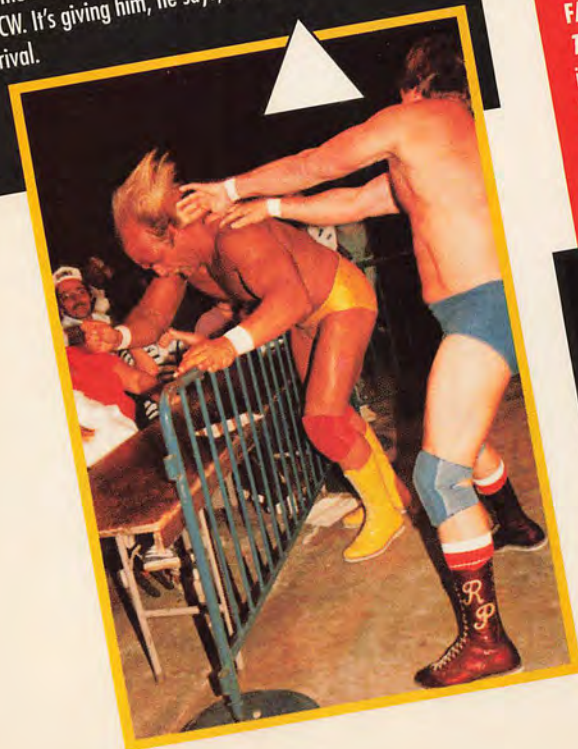
TOUGHEST OPPONENT

Randy Savage. Neither Hogan nor Savage is known for possessing great scientific skills, but together they've given us some great fights. Years ago in the WWF, a feud was ignited when Savage accused Hogan of lusting after Elizabeth. This year, that feud was rekindled when Hogan formed the NWO. Whether he wants to admit or not, Hogan knows he has never gotten an easy win over the "Macho Man."



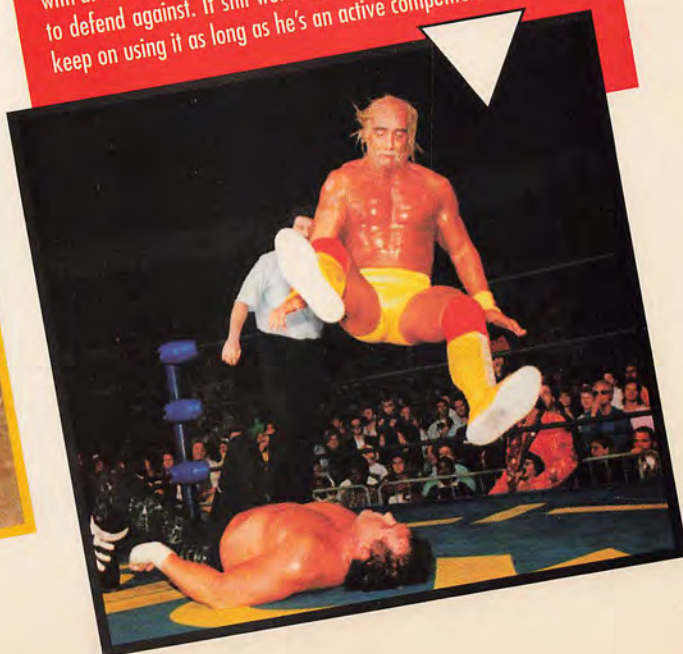
MOST HATED OPPONENT

Roddy Piper. "Rowdy" Roddy and "Hollywood" Hogan are just too much alike. Both have huge egos and very strong personalities. Both helped make wrestling what it is today and aren't too shy to tell people that. Both love a good brawl. Hogan hates Piper so much that he was probably very happy to see him show up in WCW. It's giving him, he says, another chance to humiliate an old rival.



FAVORITE MANEUVER

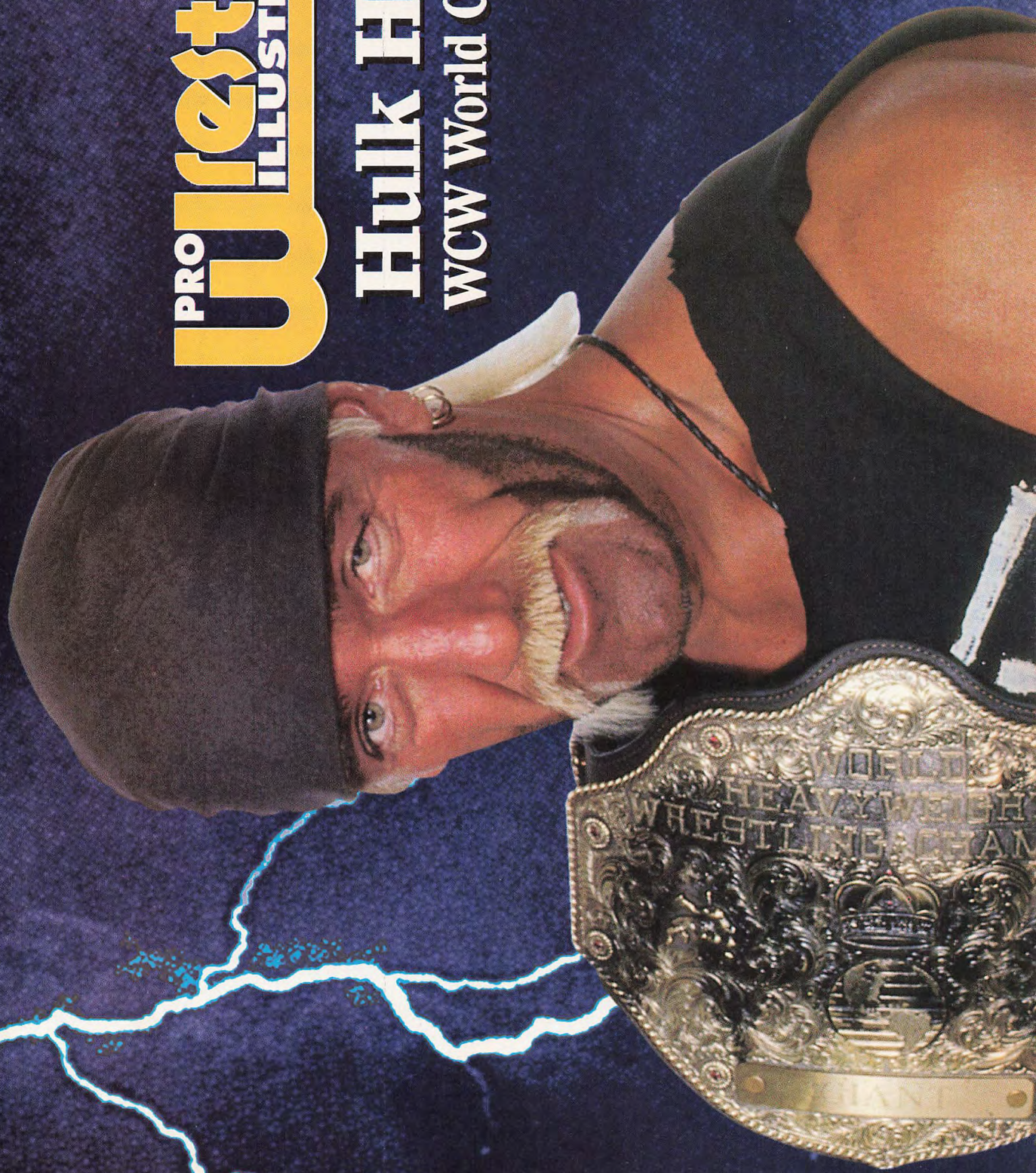
The legdrop. People keep saying Hogan needs to add to his limited wrestling repertoire, but he keeps saying that's not necessary. You just know that if it's possible, he will try to finish off a match with at least one legdrop. But that doesn't mean it's an easy move to defend against. It still works well for Hogan, and he plans to keep on using it as long as he's an active competitor.

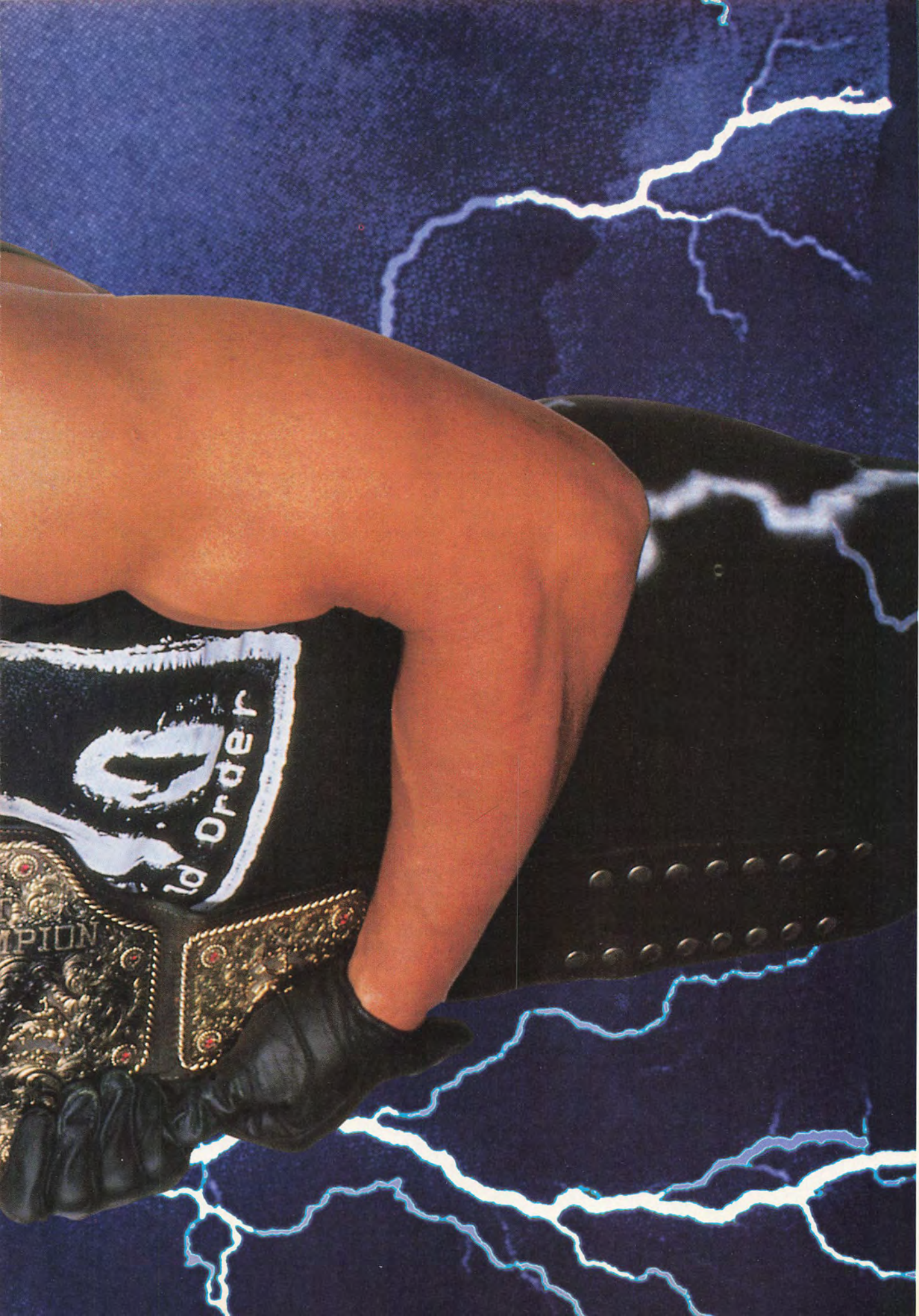


PRO **Wrestling**
ILLUSTRATED

Hulk Hogan

WCW World Champion





close-up:

HULK HOGAN

HULK HOGAN, A five-time former WWF and two-time WCW world champion, is in the process of putting a huge smudge on his incredible career and destroying any fond memories his former fans had of him ... The leader of the New World Order has displayed uncharacteristic bitterness and hatred since his shocking turn to rulebreaker in July ... Indeed, Hogan debuted as a rulebreaker 17 years ago in the Mid-Southern area under the management of Jimmy Hart, before Fred Blassie brought him to the WWF in 1979 ... Appeared in the 1983 film *Rocky III* as a wrestler named Thunderlips ... Beat Antonio Inoki to become the first IWGP heavyweight champ on June 2, 1983 ... Returned to the WWF in late-1983 after Bob Backlund lost the World title to The Iron Sheik ... On January 23, 1984, he pinned The Iron Sheik for the belt, birthing the sensational phenomenon that would become known as "Hulkamania." And for the next decade, Hogan was the WWF ... Feuded with Roddy Piper leading up to WrestleMania I on March 31, 1985, at which Hogan and Mr. T beat Piper and Paul Orndorff ... Beat King Kong Bundy in a steel cage match at WrestleMania II ... Former friend Andre the Giant turned against him in January 1987 and demanded a World title shot ... The "Hulkster" pinned Andre in front of 93,173 fans at WrestleMania III in Pontiac, Michigan ... Lost the belt to Andre on February 5, 1988, in a controversial match involving twin referees Dave and Earl Hebner ... Helped Randy Savage beat Ted DiBiase for the vacant title in the final round of the WrestleMania IV tournament ... Savage and Hogan formed The Megapowers with Elizabeth as their manager ... Savage later suspected Hogan of lusting after Elizabeth, and the alliance fell apart ... Hogan regained the title by pinning Savage in the main event of WrestleMania V ... Was cleanly pinned and lost the belt to The Ultimate Warrior at WrestleMania VI ... Sgt. Slaughter then won the belt from Warrior ... Hogan won his third WWF World title by pinning Slaughter at WrestleMania VII on March 24, 1991 ... Battled Ric Flair for the first time on October 22, 1992, and lost by countout ... Lost the title to The Undertaker at the 1992 Survivor Series, then regained it six days later ... WWF President Jack Tunney later ordered the title held up and put up for grabs at the 1993 Royal Rumble ... Hogan, Sid Justice, and Flair were the last three men remaining ... Justice eliminated Hogan, and Flair dumped out Justice ... Hogan defeated Sid by disqualification at WrestleMania VIII ... Retired and spent the next few months filming *Mr. Nanny* ... An attack by Ted DiBiase and Irwin R. Schyster on Brutus Beefcake inspired Hogan's return to the ring ... Beefcake and Hogan formed a team called The Megamaniacs ... Hogan and Beefcake lost by disqualification to Money Inc. at WrestleMania IX ... Later in the card, Yokozuna won the WWF World title from Bret Hart after manager Mr. Fuji threw salt in Hart's eyes ... Hogan came out to confer with referee Dave Hebner ... Fuji grabbed the microphone and issued an informal challenge on Yokozuna's behalf ... Hogan accepted the challenge and covered Yokozuna for the pin after Fuji's misguided attempt to throw salt in his face ... Hogan and Beefcake defeated Money Inc. by disqualification in several rematches ... Yokozuna took advantage of interference by a ringside photographer to regain the belt King of the Ring '93 ... Hogan then left the WWF ... Signed with WCW on June 11, 1994 to settle unfinished business with Flair ... Testified as a witness in the government's steroid case against WWF head Vince McMahon, who was acquitted ... Just three days after testifying, Hogan beat Flair



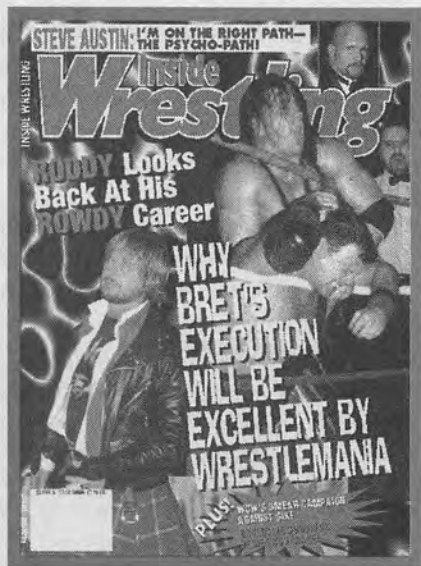
for his first WCW World title at Bash at the Beach ... Prior to the rematch at Clash XXVII, a masked man viciously attacked Hogan and injured his leg ... Hogan courageously jumped out of the hospital bed and returned to the arena, where he lost to Flair by countout ... Battled Flair in a "loser-must-retain" steel cage match at Halloween Havoc on October 24, 1994 ... Hogan supposedly ended Flair's career by pinning him to retain the belt ... After the match, the masked man was revealed to be Beefcake ... Savage entered WCW and requested a meeting with Hogan ... Hogan pinned Beefcake at Starrcade '94 ... Afterward, Savage came out and shook Hogan's hand ... Moments later in the locker room, Hogan was confronted by an angry Vader ... At Clash XXX, Hogan got up after Vader power-bombed him ... Hogan beat Vader by DQ at SuperBrawl on February 19, 1995, when Flair interfered ... Flair was reinstated by WCW during the spring of 1995, and Hogan and Savage beat him and Vader at Slamboree '95 ... Defeated Vader in a steel cage match at Bash at the Beach on July 16, 1995 ... The arrival of a rookie, The Giant, in WCW spurred memories of the Hogan vs. Andre the Giant feud of the mid-1980s ... Lost to The Giant by disqualification at Halloween Havoc '95 when Jimmy Hart interfered and hit referee

Randy Anderson. A clause had been secretly placed in the contract that allowed the belt to change hands on a DQ. But since the DQ was due to Hart's interference, the title was put up for grabs at the World War III battle royal ... Savage won it after The Giant, who had already been eliminated, pulled Hogan out of the ring ... Teamed with Savage and lost to Flair and The Giant in the main event of Clash of the Champions XXXII ... Was pinned by Flair on January 29 after Flair hit him with Elizabeth's shoe ... Slew The Giant in a steel cage match at Super Brawl VI, then took on all members of the Dungeon of Doom after the bout and ran them back to the locker room ... Left WCW in mid-spring to film a movie with Roddy Piper ... Meanwhile, Kevin Nash and Scott Hall invaded WCW as The Outsiders and wreaked

havoc ... Rumors ran rampant that Hogan would team with Hall and Nash for their Bash at the Beach showdown against Luger, Sting, and Savage ... Indeed, Hogan appeared as the third ex-WWF star in the group, legdropped Savage, and high-fived Nash and Hall ... Betrayed fans pelted the ring with drinks and food as Hogan told them to "stick it!" ... Sting called it "a dark day for wrestling" and vowed to go after Hogan ... Hogan's group called itself the New World Order and demanded recognition apart from WCW ... On August 10 in Sturgis, South Dakota, Hogan pinned The Giant for the WCW World title, thanks to help from Hall and Nash ... Hogan then joined Nash and Hall in an attack on The Booty Man (Beefcake), who had come out to thank Hogan for being his friend ... The Giant soon left the Dungeon of Doom and joined the NWO ... Hogan legdropped Savage and painted a yellow streak down his back during one *Nitro* this fall ... Ted DiBiase joined the NWO as an adviser ... Hogan tried everything to get Elizabeth to pledge her allegiance to the NWO and used Elizabeth to play mind games on Savage ... Interference by the NWO enabled Hogan to pin Savage at Halloween Havoc ... Roddy Piper, Hogan's former WWF rival, confronted Hogan at the end of Halloween Havoc and demanded a match ... Now they're continuing the feud that began in the WWF in 1985. □

this month in...

Inside Wrestling

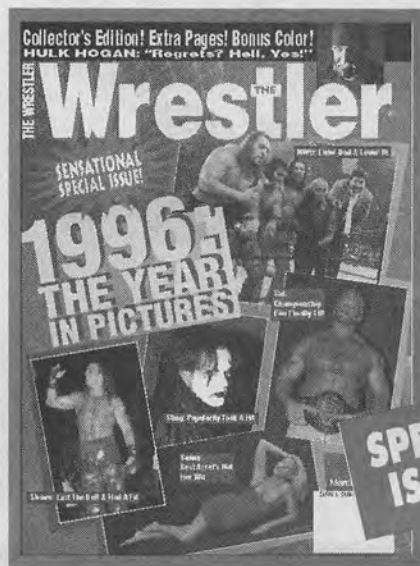


What did you think of **BRET HART'S** Survivor Series performance? He won, but he wasn't "The Excellence Of Execution" we're used to seeing, right? We'll explain why that execution will be excellent by WrestleMania ... Ever wonder what it would be like to listen to **RODDY PIPER** reflect on his "rowdy" career? We visited Piper at his home and let him look at our old photos of him. He had a lot to say! ... For weeks, rumors that **SIX** would join the NWO as the organization's chauffeur. They were unfounded, but we found how they really got started!

All this—and much more!—in the March 1997 issue of *Inside Wrestling*



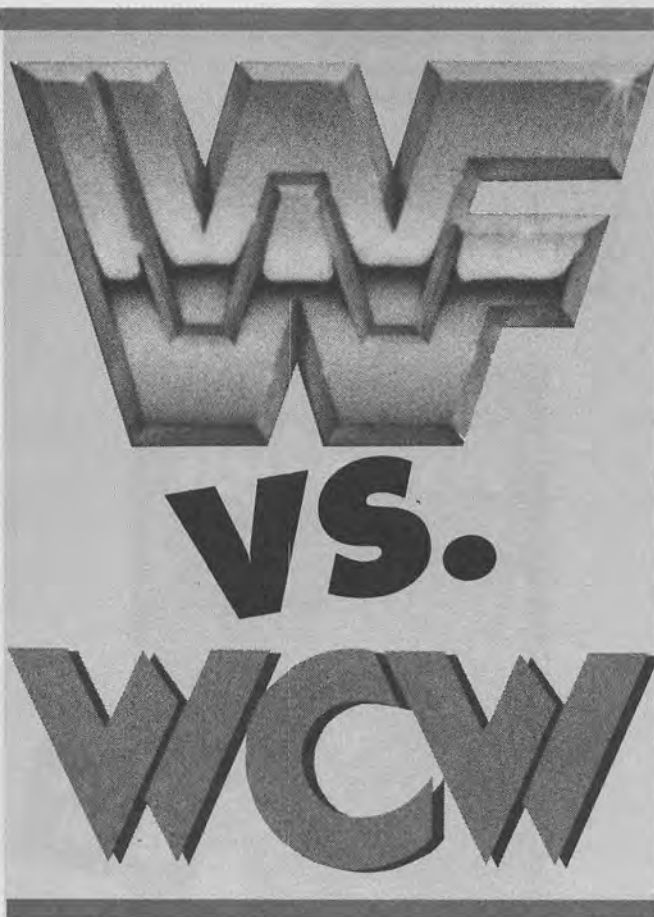
THE Wrestler



What a wild, wacky, and fascinating year 1996 was, don't you think? Certainly there was no shortage of memorable moments. We captured all the *most* memorable on film and are proud to once again present to you the "Year In Pictures." The NWO, some great comebacks, strange alliances, the loveliest ladies—you'll find it all and more in this special 27-page section! ... Did you realize **HULK HOGAN** is a man of many regrets? He is. He says he'd like to relive the last 10 years! ... Find out what was really behind the **STEVE AUSTIN-BRIAN PILLMAN** eruption!

All this—and much more!—in the March 1997 issue of *The Wrestler*





**Each month, PRO
WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED
will take a close look
at the latest
developments in the
WWF-WCW wars. It's
your chance to get a
better handle on who's
winning perhaps the
most crucial battle in
the sport's history!**

AS YOU CAN see toward the bottom of this page, we now have a pretty good read on how the WWF's decision to move *Monday Night Raw* from 9 p.m. Eastern and Pacific time to 8 p.m. Eastern and Pacific has affected the Monday night wrestling ratings wars. It hasn't ... not much, anyway.

WCW is still consistently beating the WWF in the ratings on Monday nights, and the margin of victory has remained relatively consistent. The other bad news for the WWF is that it has almost certainly lost another top star to WCW (or the NWO).

"Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig left the federation in November, and all indications are that he'll show up in WCW sometime in February. Hennig reportedly was unhappy with his WWF contract and is seriously considering *finally* returning to active competition. Let the WCW-NWO bidding war begin ... if it hasn't already!

We're not sure it would be correct to say there has been a bidding war between the WWF and WCW for the wrestling services of "Macho Man" Randy Savage, but there have been

THE RAW-NITRO WAR

June 10, 1996, is a prominent date in the history of this war. That was the last time Raw outscored Nitro in the Nielsen ratings. If there is anything positive that can be said for Raw's ratings, it's that they are ahead of the USA Network's overall 1996 prime time average of 2.0. (USA Network, incidentally, had a 13 percent overall dropoff in 1996, while TNT, at 2.1, gained five percent as a network for the year.) By all appearances, Raw's starting time change has been insignificant.

Through December 16, the cumulative Nielsen numbers were as follows: Nitro 2.95; Raw 2.63.

	Date	Rating	Households	Main Event
RAW	11/4	2.3	1.62 mil.	New Razor-Mero
NITRO	11/4	3.4	2.63 mil.	Malenko-Riggs
RAW	11/11	2.5	1.78 mil.	Michaels/Sid-Owen/Bulldog
NITRO	11/11	3.5	2.46 mil.	Jarrett-Benoit
RAW	11/18	2.4	1.69 mil.	Austin-Mankind
NITRO	11/18	3.2	2.19 mil.	Benoit-Guerrero
RAW	11/25	2.1	1.50 mil.	Bret-Owen
NITRO	11/25	3.1	2.17 mil.	Heat-Fear
RAW	12/2	2.3	1.64 mil.	Mero/Roberts-Helmsley/Bi. Gunn
NITRO	12/2	3.3	2.37 mil.	Sting-R. Steiner
RAW	12/9	2.3	1.62 mil.	Sid-Helmsley
NITRO	12/9	3.1	2.20 mil.	Page-Jarrett
RAW	12/16	2.3	1.60 mil.	Gunn-Gunn
NITRO	12/16	3.2	2.24 mil.	Hall/Nash-Barbarian/Meng

some interesting stories about him floating around. One surfaced just one day after the WWF's In Your House XII pay-per-view in December. All over the Internet was news that Savage had signed a 10-year deal with the WWF.

A 10-year deal?

That was our response, too, so we contacted a high-ranking executive in the WWF, and he told us that the story was "absolutely not true." As of this writing, Savage had not wrestled in any televised matches since he lost to WCW World champion Hulk Hogan at Halloween Havoc in October (he competed on a few non-televised cards shortly after that event). Sources, however, told *PWJ* that the "Macho Man" was more likely to re-sign with WCW than he was to jump back to the WWF, the federation that poked fun at him via its "Billionaire Ted" skits early in 1996.

The news, however, is certainly not all bad for the WWF. It has worked out an agreement with Mexico's AAA promotion, which had a working relationship with WCW until many of AAA's stars joined PROMO Azteca, a new Mexican promotion. Now some of AAA's stars have entered the WWF and started to compete there part-time. The first two: Cibernetico

and Pierroth Jr., who are already among the top contenders to the WWF World tag team title.

Also part of the Mexican "invasion" of the WWF is perhaps the most legendary Mexican wrestler of all-time, Mil Mascaras. Mascaras did commentary with the WWF's Spanish broadcasting team during the WWF TV tapings in mid-December. Cibernetico and Pierroth Jr., by the way, had some very disparaging things to say about Mascaras at those tapings and taunted him as he sat at the broadcast table. The WWF is hoping that by adding a few colorful high-flying, high-impact Mexican wrestlers, the federation will become more exciting and interesting. Hey, it worked for WCW!

Also good for the WWF, it hopes, will be its new late-night program, *Shotgun Saturday Night*, which was scheduled to premiere in January. The show was initially expected to be picked in only a few markets around the country, but if it proves to be successful, you can bet that many other stations will start airing it, too.

If it is, will we soon see a WCW show on TNT late Saturday nights?

Stay tuned.

VOICE OF THE FANS

Nitro is the best two hours of wrestling action currently on television. There's so much going on that the hours seem to go by in mere minutes. I find it fascinating to see the turmoil of a federation under siege.

DEREK LINDSAY
Atlantic City, NJ

The only reason *Nitro* is doing so well is the presence of the New World Order. A lot of fans are tuning in to see what they are going to do next, not caring about what else is actually going on. And since it's the hottest thing going, of course, Eric Bischoff had to jump on the bandwagon. But where will that leave WCW in its war with the WWF?

JANIS FOUNTAIN
Wheeling, WV

Right now is the time for the WWF to gain a lot of momentum. The In Your House XII pay-per-view was good, and the use of international guys is helping add excitement to the normal roster. Also, the return of Bret Hart is making it hard for me to miss *Raw*. Now if only the WWF can keep it up until the NWO disintegrates, they'll win the war.

MICHELLE LARETO
Buffalo, NY

If Kevin Nash didn't appear on *Nitro*, I wouldn't watch it.

MARTA CRABTREE
Jamestown, TN

Moving *Raw* to one hour earlier was a mistake for the WWF. This move proves that *Nitro* is winning the time-slot battle. I think this move should really have no effect upon the ratings, since *Raw* is still opposite *Nitro*. I just think it's a desperate move on the WWF's part.

KAREN COOK
Jasper, WY

The WWF is finally doing what the fans wanted all along: bringing in top international talent. It was a coup for them to get Doug Furnas and Phil Lafon (a.k.a. Dan Kroffat). It was another good move for them to start bringing in AAA stars, unless this is just another temporary thing that will fade away in a few months.

MATT DUFFORC
Houma, LA

It's nice to see that the WWF's finally cleaning up its act.

First, "Psycho" Sid beat that pretty boy Shawn Michaels, then Goldust admits he does like women, and Brian Pillman is still hurt and isn't often seen on interviews. What's next? We can only hope that it will be the spontaneous combustion of The New Razor Ramon and Diesel.

BYRON WILTEN
Charleston, SC

Raw has better matches.

JASON GUTHRIE
Arlington, TX

They Said It!

Ted Turner: "He's the only guy who gets my dander up. I like everybody else in the world ... now that Hitler's dead. He thinks he's so powerful he can do anything he wants. When you push real hard to try and create a monopoly and conquer the world ... no one's done it yet and he's going to fail." No, Turner wasn't talking about Vince McMahon. The object of his disdain is Fox CEO Rupert Murdoch.



WHAT I'M GONNA TELL YOU.

I wanna tell you ... wrestlers' speech patterns have come a long way over the past 30 years. My first wrestling memory is from the early-1970s. It's of The Grand Wizard of Wrestling snatching a microphone out of Vince McMahon's hand and snarling, "McMahon, I wanna tell you ..."

Now fast-forward that audio tape to December 9, 1996. Charlotte, North Carolina. Gene Okerlund is interviewing Rick and Scott Steiner and asks Scott a question about Sting.

Replies Scott before actually replying: "Let me tell you something, Gene Okerlund ..."

Wrestlers are the only athletes in the world who let you know that they're telling you something before they tell you, even though you know they're going to tell you because you just asked them a question.

Can you imagine the following scenarios?

The Declaration Of Love

Scott Steiner's Wife: Scott, do you love me?

Scott Steiner: I wanna tell you, honey, that I do.

The Traffic Ticket

Police Officer: Mr. Flair, do you realize that you were going 85 miles per hour in a 55 mile-per-hour zone?

Ric Flair: Let me tell you something, Mr. Cop. The "Nature Boy" wasn't going 85 miles per hour.

The Marriage Proposal

Steve McMichael: I wanna tell you, darlin', that I wanna marry you.

Therefore, I wanna tell all my

readers that I went to a speech and language analyst and said, "I wanna tell you that wrestlers keep saying I wanna tell you and speaking in strange patterns not used by any other humans on the face of this planet. I wanna tell you that I wanna ask you to analyze these patterns and tell me what you think."

The speech and language analyst's name was Dr. Judy Ready of Massachusetts. She has spent 20 years working with mumblers, ramblers, politicians, shy guys, and hearing-impaired individuals. She spent a month watching hundreds of hours of tapes and speaking with the wrestlers themselves. Her findings were rather interesting.

"I found that wrestlers are a very assertive group of people," Dr. Ready reported. "They are firm in their convictions and very confident."



Ever notice that Hulk Hogan starts almost every interview with, "Well you know something ..."? Of course you did! One speech analyst said most wrestlers are obsessed with making sure the points they make are absolutely clear.



Twenty-five years ago, The Grand Wizard used to start his interviews with, "I wanna tell you ..." Hey, guys, don't tell us you wanna tell us something—just tell us!

However, they are more comfortable communicating physically with their bodies than verbally with their mouths. To compensate, they over-compensate. In other words, they aren't sure that they are making themselves understood, so they spell everything out as clearly as possible, saying things like, 'I wanna tell you,' as an introduction, when it's obvious that they are telling you, and referring to themselves in the third person.

"That's why you often hear wrestlers repeating their own names and the names of their opponents, and reciting in detail events that have already happened. They simply aren't comfortable with their verbal communication skills."

She cited other examples such as Hulk Hogan always saying, "You know something ..." to start a thought, and Dusty Rhodes referring to himself as "'American Dream' Dusty Rhodes." Also, there is a tendency toward superlatives.

"Everything is 'the greatest this,' or 'the most that,'" Dr. Ready found. "There's very little middle ground.

It's as if their amplifier is always on 10, and never on five or six. Although I'd like to examine this phenomenon further, it seems as though most wrestlers speak with strained vocal chords, much like President Clinton. There's very little relaxation in their voices and, as a result, it would seem to me that wrestlers should frequently suffer from sore throats and laryngitis, much like President Clinton.

"Most wrestlers speak with a lot of body language. They move their arms a lot and point at the camera. Their faces jerk around a lot. Again, this comes from being more comfortable with physical than verbal communication. And their statements are often accompanied by the threat of physical violence. Most wrestlers are convinced that actions speak much louder than words."

The "prepared script speech," Dr. Ready said, is another characteristic of wrestlers' speaking patterns. Dr. Ready noted that many wrestlers seem to have spent a considerable amount of time thinking about what they're going to say before they actu-

ally say it, and for that reason come off as if they've already rehearsed their response.

"Sometimes they'll give an answer that has nothing to do with the question," Dr. Ready said. "You can almost sense that many of these wrestlers were up the night before thinking about what they wanted to say, planning every word. The amazing thing is that they'll climb into the wrestling ring and perform with complete spontaneity. But this same flow of energy and actions isn't visible in the less comfortable situation of a formal interview."

Many of Dr. Ready's findings, which ran more than 50 pages in her report, are of little interest to even a hardcore wrestling fan. But they can be easily summed up: She wants to tell us that wrestlers are more comfortable inside the ring than in general society. And I wanna tell you that I already suspected that much. ☐

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win or lose draw

BY ANDY RODRIGUEZ

SID VICIOUS' MARCH to the WWF World title didn't begin when he entered the WWF. It began when he started to wrestle.

As "Psycho" Sid, he's been proving that he is not an ordinary wrestler, not even an ordinary big man. He combines his size and power with an amazing intensity that is beyond frightening; it is unreal. "Psycho" doesn't quite describe it.

Now, finally, he has converted that energy into a championship attitude. He may not hold that championship for long. Bret Hart might beat him. Shawn Michaels might beat him. Steve Austin might beat him. Even Goldust or The Undertaker might beat him. But Sid is always going to be there, in some way.

I had a chance to meet Sid about three weeks before his title-winning performance. I declined to interview him at length, because I really didn't believe I had much to ask him, other than what everyone else asks him. I didn't want to waste my time, or his, and I didn't want to hear him give the same answers he usually gives—in a very loud voice.

"You must be crazy," one of my reporter colleagues said. "You can't pass up an opportunity like that. He's one of the top stars. Ask him what his favorite color is. Ask him anything. Who cares what you ask him?"

Normally I would have had the same attitude, but this time I wasn't buying any of it. I decided that I'd watch him for a few more weeks until deciding whether to write anything about him that would even attempt to break any new ground.

Then he shocked me by winning the WWF World championship, and I decided it would be a good time to devote a column to him. Still, I wondered if I had waited too long. Should I have taken the interview when I had

the chance? Was there a new angle upon which no one had touched?

It didn't matter. I thought I had plenty to say about Sid. "Psycho" could be World champion—or in contention for the belt—for a long time.

My first impulse was to travel to Sid's hometown of West Memphis, Arkansas, in an attempt to discover how Sid was finally molded into a WWF World champion. But I decided this would be a waste of time. I didn't want to hear a bunch of old-timers say things like, "Yeah, I remember the time Sid wrestled a bear and won. Then he turned six ..."

No, that was not what I wanted to hear. But I wasn't exactly sure what I did want to hear. There was something gnawing at me. I couldn't quite figure out what it was, but I was determined to find out.

A week later, I was preparing for a trip to Atlanta when I

(Continued on page 46)



Sid sets Shawn Michaels up for a power bomb during their Survivor Series '96 match. Andy Rodriguez predicts that his win over Sid for the WWF World title won't be the last big triumph of Sid's career.

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win, lose, or draw

(Continued from page 44)

received a call from an old friend. He was once involved in the wrestling business, but he had dropped out in disgust. I never did really go into the reasons with him.

"Hey," he said. "I hear you're looking for some information on Sid."

"Maybe," I answered. "Why are you interested?"

"Just consider it an old favor from an old friend," he replied.

Well, he did give me his information. It was absolutely useless. Some scuttlebutt concerning Sid's old partnership with a former tag team partner. I had heard it before. It was a dead end.

A few more such "hot tips" came my way, and they all turned out to be equally useless. It was beginning to look as though I'd have to write about Sid what everyone else was writing.

I was ready to move on to other stories when I received a second call from my old pal.

"I'm serious this time," he insisted. "This is one you have to follow up on. If you miss this, they'll take away your press card."

Despite my trepidation, I decided to bite. He insisted that I meet him at an old hangout of ours in Norfolk, Virginia. At least this made sense to me, because I'd received a lot of solid information from him over the years at this location.

He walked into the place, and I laughed. There he was, wearing the same torn-up denim jacket and green baseball cap with the word RAIDERS stitched on in yellow. He never did tell me who the Raiders were. But what he did tell me that night was, I thought then, some powerful stuff.

Armed with this knowledge, I set about planning what was going to be the story of the year. I would call this person and that person, meet this guy and that guy. I had it all figured out. I was even going to try to get an interview with Sid.

With each call and each interview, I moved closer to my goal of "understanding the real Sid." The information my friend had given me was being confirmed by all my sources. I won't even have to talk to Sid, I thought. This stuff will stand up on its own.

Then I received another call. This one was from someone very close to Sid.

"Heard you're planning a big story," he said.

"Yeah," I answered. "What's it to you?"

"I know what it is you're writing about," he replied. "So does Sid. It would be embarrassing to him. Why don't you reconsider?"

"Look, this won't embarrass him," I said. "Maybe in the short term, but in the long run, it'll make him look better. I'm planning on printing this, and I think Sid will be pleased. But before I go ahead with this, I would like to speak with Sid."

"That ain't gonna happen," said his pal. "You do what

you have to do, but don't expect any cooperation from him."

Truth is, if my sources are indeed correct, there was a very good chance that had Sid lost to Michaels at Survivor Series, we might never have received cooperation from Sid again.

A couple of weeks before Sid's match with Michaels at Survivor Series, Sid handed a sealed envelope to Gorilla Monsoon. He instructed the WWF president that he should open the envelope only if he failed to take the World title from Michaels. If he won, Monsoon should take the



Now that Sid has that WWF title, everyone, it seems, is paying more attention to him and what he does. But Rodriguez discovered that had Sid lost the match, he would have disappeared forever.

unopened envelope and run it through a shredder.

Maybe Monsoon couldn't resist the temptation to open the envelope, but several independent sources have confirmed the contents of the letter that was inside. Sid vowed to retire from wrestling forever if he couldn't win the World title.

Wow! Such a drastic step to take at a time when he was hotter than he'd been for years. Maybe Sid was seeking motivation that he felt was lacking throughout his career. Regardless of why he did it, and the dubious method by which he accomplished his goal, Sid walked out of Madison Square Garden with the World title belt.

Don't worry, Sid, your secret is good with me. □

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arena reports

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UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

BAKERSFIELD—Slammers Wrestling Federation at Strongbow Stadium: Heavyweight champ Jeff Lindberg defeated El Toro Bravo ... Pete Malloy pinned Ernie Evans ... Tyrone Little pinned The Samoan Kid ... El Espirito beat Jesus Zapata ... Joy Boy pinned Hombre de Oro. (11-21-96)

—Gregg John

CONNECTICUT

NEW HAVEN—WWF Monday Night Raw broadcast and taping from the Coliseum: Marc Mero wrestled Billy Gunn to a double-disqualification ... Justin Bradshaw pinned Jesse James ... The Executioner pinned Freddie Joe Floyd ... Steve Austin beat Mankind by disqualification ... Faarooq pinned Savio Vega ... Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon pinned Lelf Cassidy & Bob Holly ... World champ Sid Vicious beat Intercontinental champ Hunter Hearst Helmsley ... Rocky Maivia beat Salvatore Sincere ... The New Diesel pinned Phineas Godwinn ... Bret Hart beat Owen Hart by disqualification ... Marc Mero beat Billy Gunn by disqualification ... Goldust pinned Bart Gunn ... The Undertaker pinned Mankind ... Jesse James beat Justin Bradshaw & Zebakiah in a handicap match ... Marc Mero & Jake Roberts beat Hunter Hearst Helmsley & Billy Gunn ... Flash Funk pinned The Goon ... World champ Sid Vicious pinned Big Van Vader ... Shawn Michaels pinned Steve Austin. (11-18-96)

—Nick Mahmood

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON—East Coast Wrestling Alliance at St. Matthew's Parish Hall: Warhawk beat The Animal ... Armageddon defeated Glen Osbourne in a bullrope match ... Mr. Ooh La La beat The Inferno Kid in a hat-on-a-pole match ... The Japanese Assassin defeated heavyweight champion Cheetah Master. After the match, the Assassin was unmasked to reveal Lance

Diamond ... Glen Osbourne defeated heavyweight champ Lance Diamond in a challenge match to win the title ... Tag team champs Armageddon & Viper beat Primo Carnera & Mike Mayhem ... Kid Flash beat Ace Darling in a cage match. (11-23-96)

—Matt DeCarlo

FLORIDA

HOLLYWOOD—Sunshine Wrestling Federation at Madonna HS: Paul Adonis beat Punk Rock ... Joe DeFuria defeated Vampire Warrior ... Caribbean champ Johnny Torres beat Snot Dudley ... Bob Davis defeated Larry Lane ... Duke Droese defeated heavyweight champ Demon Hellstorm in a non-title match. (11-20-96)

—Bernie Siegel

GEORGIA

ELBERTON—All-Pro Wrestling at the Burke Street Gym: Shane Austin beat Kamikaze Kid ... Rick Michaels beat High Performance ... Lady Venus beat Tonya Terrific ... The Road Hoggs beat tag team champs Stone Cold Kid & Sweet Dreams to win the title ... The Soultaker beat The Enforcer ... High Performance beat Bill Starr ... Stone-Cold Kid beat heavyweight champ Star Ryder by DQ ... Shane Austin beat TV champ Rick Michaels to win the title. (11-16-96)

—Dan Parris

INDIANA

WHITING—Windy City Wrestling at Clark High School: Ivan Urkoff pinned Terry Allen ... Armed Forces beat Amerikka's Most Wanted ... Middleweight champ The Nomad beat Ripper Manson by disqualification ... Lightweight champ Brandon Bishop beat Hammer ... Tag team champs Mike Anthony & Steve Boz beat Frank Melson & Bulldozer Rollins by reverse decision ... Ken Patera defeated Hurricane Smith ... Frank Melson & Bulldozer Rollins co-won a battle royal. (11-16-96)

—Chris Smith

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE—WCW at the Baltimore Arena: Rick Steiner beat The Barbarian ... Jeff Jarrett beat Big Bubba Rogers ... Cruiserweight champ Dean Malenko beat Eddy Guerrero ... Konnan & Hugh Morris defeated Psicosis & Juventud Guerrera ... Six beat Rey Misterio Jr. ... Lex Luger defeated Arn Anderson ... Kevin Sullivan wrestled Chris Benoit to a no-contest in a falls-count-anywhere-match ... The Giant beat Sting

by disqualification ... World tag team champs Scott Hall & Kevin Nash beat Harlem Heat. (11-23-96)

—Rey Ney & Chris Williams

BALTIMORE—Mid-Eastern Wrestling Federation at the Teamster Auditorium: Bobby Starr beat Joey Matthews ... Junior heavyweight champion Steve Corino pinned Adam Flash ... Jason Knight beat Earl the Pearl ... Danny Rose beat Quinn Nash when Nash was unable to continue due to injury ... Raven, Stevie Richards, & The Blue Meanie beat Johnny Gunn & The Samoan Gangsta Tribe ... Lucifer pinned Knuckles Zandwich ... Jimmy Cicero beat Joe Thunder ... Darkside, Mark Schrader, & Boo Bradley defeated The Headbangers, Axl Rotten, & Corporal Punishment. According to a prematch stipulation, Darkside became the new tag team champs since Darkside Rebel pinned Headbanger Thrasher, who was one-half of the MEWF tag team champs. (11-10-96)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

LANDOVER—WWF at the USAir Arena: The Sultan defeated Bob Holly ... Justin Bradshaw beat Aldo Montoya ... Billy Gunn beat Bart Gunn ... Sid Vicious beat Big Van Vader in a stretcher match ... World tag team champs Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith defeated Henry & Phineas Godwinn ... Intercontinental champ Hunter Hearst Helmsley defeated Marc Mero ... Shawn Michaels & The Undertaker defeated Mankind & Goldust in a steel cage match. (11-02-96)

—Rey Ney

MASSACHUSETTS

WORCESTER—WWF at the Centrum: The Sultan beat Bob Holly ... Justin Bradshaw defeated Aldo Montoya ... Billy Gunn defeated Bart Gunn ... Sid Vicious beat Big Van Vader in a stretcher match ... World tag team champions Davey Boy Smith & Owen Hart beat Henry & Phineas Godwinn ... Marc Mero defeated Intercontinental champ Hunter Hearst Helmsley by disqualification ... Shawn Michaels & The Undertaker defeated Mankind & Goldust in a steel cage match. (11-03-96)

—Jeff Norwood & Randy Lonstein

MICHIGAN

WARREN—Championship Wrestling Federation at the YMCA Gym: Ricco Rodriguez pinned cruiserweight champ Steve Nixon to win the title ... Calavera Cortez beat heavyweight champ Skull Ganz to win the title ... Johnny Paradise

beat El Rojo Diablo ... Motor City Wrestling tag team champs **Bobby & Woody Lee** wrestled **Mike Kelly & Rock Stevens** to a no-contest ... **Knight Hawk** defeated **Death Dealer** ... **Tommy Starr** beat **Killer Kanarek** in a first-blood match ... **Larry Brun** beat **The Annihilator** ... **Bobby Clancy** beat **Otis Apollo** in a best-of-three-falls match ... **The Cold Brothers** beat **Keith Calhoun & Brad Johnson**.
(11-16-96)

—Kurt Schneider

SAGINAW—WCW at the Civic Center: Cruiserweight champ **Dean Malenko** beat **Chris Jericho** ... **The Nasty Boys** defeated **Juventud Guerrera & Psicosis** ... **Six** defeated **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **Lex Luger** beat **Chris Benoit** ... **Eddy Guerrero** beat **Dallas Page** ... **Sting** won a triangle match against **Randy Savage** and **The Giant** ... World tag team champions **Scott Hall & Kevin Nash** beat **Harlem Heat**.
(11-03-96)

—Valerie Nemchek

NEW YORK

NEW YORK—WWF Survivor Series pay-per-view at Madison Square Garden: **Bart Gunn**, **Jesse James**, **Bob Holly**, & **Aldo Montoya** defeated **Justin Bradshaw**, **Salvatore Sincere**, **The Sultan**, & **Billy Gunn** in a match not shown on the pay-per-view. Order of elimination: The Sultan forced Montoya to submit, Bart Gunn pinned Sincere, Bradshaw pinned Holly, Jesse James pinned The Sultan, Billy Gunn pinned Jesse James, and Billy Gunn pinned Bart Gunn to win the match ... **Doug Furnas**, **Phil Lafon**, and **Henry & Phineas Godwinn** defeated **Owen Hart**, **Davey Boy Smith**, **Marty Jannetty**, & **Leif Cassidy**. Order of elimination: Henry Godwinn pinned Jannetty, Hart pinned Henry Godwinn, Smith pinned Phineas Godwinn, Lafon pinned Cassidy, Lafon pinned Smith, and Furnas pinned Hart to win the bout ... **The Undertaker** beat **Mankind**. According to a prematch stipulation, **Paul Bearer** was suspended above ring in a cage for the match ... **Marc Mero**, **Barry Windham**, **Rocky Maivia**, & **Jake Roberts** beat **Goldust**, **Hunter Hearst Helmsley**, **Jerry Lawler**, & **Crush**. Order of elimination: Roberts pinned Lawler, Goldust pinned Windham, Mero pinned Helmsley, Crush pinned Mero, Crush pinned Roberts, Maivia pinned Crush, Maivia pinned Goldust to win the bout ... **Bret Hart** pinned **Steve Austin** ... **Yokozuna**, **Savio Vega**, **Flash Funk**, & **Jimmy Snuka** wrestled **Big Van Vader**, **Faarooq**, **The New Razor Ramon**, & **The New Diesel** to a double-disqualification ... **Sid Vicious** pinned World champion **Shawn Michaels** (with **Jose Lothario**) to win the title.
(11-17-96)

—Brandi Mankiewicz

MIDDLETOWN—Extreme Championship Wrestling at the Orange County Fairgrounds: **Louie Spicolli** beat **Stevie Richards** ... **"Big" Dick Dudley** beat **Eric Experience** in a handicap match ... **2 Cold Scorpio** defeated **Davey Tyler** ... **Bubba Ray & Spike Dudley** beat **Axl Rotten & D-Von Dudley** ... **Pit Bull II** beat **Brian Lee** ... **Mike Whipwreck** defeated **Raven** ... **Pit Bull II** beat **The Pittsburgh Steel Team** ... TV champ **Shane Douglas** beat **Tommy Dreamer** ... Heavyweight champ **The Sandman** beat **2 Cold Scorpio** ... Tag team champs **The Gangstas** won a triangle match over **The Eliminators** and **Sabu & Rob Van Dam**.
(11-02-96)

—Brent Winsor

STATEN ISLAND—ECW at Sportsfest: **Bubba Ray & Spike Dudley** defeated **D-Von Dudley & Rick Savage** ... **Pit Bull II** defeated **Devon Storm** ... **Mikey Whipwreck & Davey Tyler** beat **Eric Experience** ... **Bill Alfonso** defeated **Tod Gordon** ... **Steve Williams** beat **2 Cold Scorpio** ... TV champ **Shane Douglas** wrestled **Louie Spicolli** to a no-contest ... **The Eliminators** beat **Sabu & Rob Van Dam** ... **Tommy Dreamer & The Sandman** defeated **Brian Lee & Raven** in a steel cage match.
(11-01-96)

—Justin Saunders

NEW JERSEY

SALEM—NWA at the High School: **Ace Darling** pinned **Billy Kidman** ... U.S. tag team champs **Downward Spiral** beat **The Lost Boys** ... **James Morgan** pinned **John Gray** ... **Kid Flash** beat **Rik Ratchet** ... **Rasta the Voodoo Man** wrestled **Ralph Soto** to a double-countout ... **H.D. Ryder** beat **The Icon** ... **Don Montoya** beat **Patch** ... **Jason Knight** beat **Jimmy Shoulders** and **Derek Domino** in a triangle match.
(11-23-96)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

BLACKWOOD—NWA at Highland High School: Tag team champs **Downward Spiral** beat **Bad Attitude** ... **East L.A.** pinned **Julio Sanchez** ... **Jason Knight** wrestled **Jimmy Shoulders** to a double-disqualification ... **The Inferno Kid** beat **Ralph Soto** ... **Rik Ratchet** beat **Don Montoya** ... **The Lost Boys** beat **Derek Domino & Harley Lewis** ... **Gus the Greek** pinned **Patch** ... North American champ **Reckless Youth** pinned **Ace Darling** ... **Doink the Clown** beat **Rocco Dorsey**.
(11-16-96)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

NORTH CAROLINA

BUTNER—Southern Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Boris Dragoff** beat **Tracy Gilbert** ... **Dave Blanchard** beat **Striker** ... **Pat & C.W. Anderson** beat **Sexton Hardcastle & Christian Cage** ... **Tracey Smothers** beat **Beau James** ... **Major DeBeers** defeated **Tommy Barnett** ... **Gorgeous George III** beat heavy-weight champ **Chris Stevenson** to win the title.
(11-23-96)

—Greg Mosorjak

CHARLOTTE—Pro Wrestling Federation at the Training Center: **Black Angel** beat **Tyrone Knox** ... **Masked Maniac** defeated **Cruel Connection II** ... **Carolina Dreamer & Italian Stallion** beat **Terry Austin & George South** ... Junior heavy-weight champ **Madd Maxxine** beat **Star Ryder & Flaming Youth** in a handicap match.
(11-23-96)

—Brock Chandler

SMITH GROVE—AIWF at the Community Center: **The Scorpion** beat **Dr. Love** ... **Jumpin' Jimmy** beat **Robert Roma** by disqualification ... **The Black Knight** defeated **Aries** ... **The Mercenaries** beat **Rick Deezeel & Brian Danzig** ... **The Tennessee Violence Authority** wrestled **Dynamite Doug & Johnny Reb** to a double-countout ... **The Ghost Riders** beat **King Cobra & Neil Leathers** ... **The Intimidator** won a 20-man steel cage battle royal.
(11-23-96)

—Dean Puckett

THOMASVILLE—PWF at the NAPA Store (matinee card): **Dr. Feelgood** beat **Black Angel** ...
(Continued on page 50)

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arena reports

(Continued from page 49)

Junior heavyweight champion **Madd Maxxine** beat **Flaming Youth** ... **Italian Stallion** beat **Terry Austin** ... Heavyweight champion **George South** beat **Carolina Dreamer**.
(11-23-96)

—Brock Chandler

JACKSONVILLE—SCW at the Armory: **Frank Parker** beat **Poison Ivey** ... **Sexton Hardcastle** & **Christian Cage** beat **Beau James** & **David Blanchard** ... **Viper** defeated **Major DeBeers** ... **Chris Stevenson** beat **Roger Anderson** ... **Gorgeous George III** beat **Tracey Smothers**.
(11-22-96)

—Greg Mosorjak

CANDOR—Championship Wrestling Federation at the Brutonville MS: **Carolina Warrior** defeated **Nick of Time** ... **Big Cheese** & **David Isley** beat **The Cruel Connection** ... **Will Shooter** & **Tim Jackson** beat **Cannon** & **One Man Posse** ... **Kid Dynamo** defeated **Black Skull** ... **Willie Clay** wrestled **Rick Link** to a double-countout ... **Simba** & **The Southern Rocker** beat **Slash** & **Muhammed Abdul** ... **The Carolina Juicer** defeated **Star Ryder**.
(11-09-96)

—Dan Parrish

CLAYTON—ICW at the Cooper Elementary School: **Soulman** defeated **David Daniels** ... **Dark Starr** beat **Rob McBride** ... **D.C. Queen** & **Sebastian Kane** defeated **The Army of Aggression** to win the vacant tag team title ... **Brandi Wine** beat **Foxy Lady** to win the vacant women's title ... Heavyweight champ **Marc Ash** wrestled **Major Justice** to a double-disqualification.
(11-09-96)

—Marcus Watkins

TAYLORSVILLE—PWF at the Armory: **Gladiator II** beat **Flaming Youth** ... Heavyweight champ **George South** defeated **Carolina Dreamer** in a Texas death match ... **Baby Huey** beat **Russian Assassin II** ... Junior heavyweight champ **Madd Maxxine** defeated **Black Angel** & **Tyrone Knox** in a handicap match ... **Italian Stallion** beat **Terry Austin**.
(11-08-96)

—Brock Chandler

OHIO

MANSFIELD—ASWA at the Commerce Center: In the semifinals of the **ASWA tag team tournament**: **Isha Dekimasu** & **Micro Menace** beat **Bo Dacious** & **Erik Starr** ... **Chris Harris** & **Lou Marconi** beat **Roger Ruffin** & **The Prince of Polyester** ... In other bouts: **Kenny Hendrix** pinned **Chip Endale** ... **Prince of Polyester** beat **Mayko Kaelin** ... Light heavyweight champ **Kid Collins** pinned **Jimmie Lee** ... **Lumberin' Jack** beat **Chris Harris** ... Heavyweight champ **Thunder Morgan** pinned **Kaos**.
(11-22-96)

—Jeff Gorman

CIRCLEVILLE—IWA TV taping at the County Fairgrounds Arena: **Hollywood Hubie** defeated **The Casanova Clique** in a handicap match ... **Jesse Salica** beat **Savannah Slim** by countout ...

IWA champ **Bull Miller** defeated **Tommy Rich** by disqualification ... **Mr. Sandman** beat **Kenny Hendrix** ... **Ken Patera** beat **Maniac Mark**.
(11-09-96)

—Jeff Gorman

PENNSYLVANIA

NORTH VERSAILLES—Pro Wrestling Express at the Wrestleplex: **The Extreme Militia** beat **Bonecrusher** & **Quinn Magnum** ... **J.B. Destiny** beat **John Doe** ... **Sheriff Steele** beat heavy-weight champ **Brian Anthony** by disqualification ... **Col. Payne** beat **Leviathan** by disqualification ... **Bubba the Bulldog** defeated **Paul Atlas** ... Tag team champs **The Giant Hillbillies** beat **The Jester** & **The Jackal** ... **Lou Marconi** pinned **Big Daddy Adams** (who was substituting for North American champ **Black Cat**) to win the title ... **Leviathan** pinned **T. Rantula** on the hood of a car to win a falls-count-anywhere match.
(11-23-96)

—Jeff Gorman

FAIRLESS HILLS—UWWA at Westaby Hall: **H.D. Ryder** beat **Moose Maretti** by disqualification ... **The Dark Ninja** beat **Tony Stallone** by disqualification ... **Larry Winters** pinned **Lost Boy Yar** ... **Darkside** beat **Marvelous Inc.** ... **Doug Deveraux** pinned **Doink** ... Heavyweight champ **Ace Darling** beat **Billy Kidman** ... **Tito Santana** pinned **Big Slam** ... **Darkside** co-won a battle royal.
(11-22-96)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

PHILADELPHIA—ECW's "November To Remember" at the ECW Arena: **Stevie Richards** beat **David Jericho** ... **Axl Rotten** defeated **Hack Myers** ... **Bubba Ray Dudley** beat **D-Von Dudley** ... **The Eliminators** wrestled **Sabu** & **Rob Van Dam** to a draw ... **Chris Candido** beat **Mikey Whipwreck** ... Tag team champs **The Gangstas** beat **The Eliminators** and **Sabu** & **Rob Van Dam** in a three-way match ... **2 Cold Scorpio** defeated **Devon Storm** ... **2 Cold Scorpio** beat **J.T. Smith** ... **2 Cold Scorpio** beat **Hack Myers** ... **Louie Spicolli** beat **2 Cold Scorpio** ... Heavyweight champ **The Sandman** beat **Raven** ... **Terry Funk** & **Tommy Dreamer** beat **Brian Lee** & **Shane Douglas**.
(11-16-96)

—Timothy A. Walker

PLYMOUTH MEETING—ECW at the Lu Lu Temple: **Mikey Whipwreck** beat **The Dirt Bike Kid** ... **Chris Candido** beat **Spike Dudley** ... **Rob Van Dam** beat **David Jericho** ... **Axl Rotten** & **Bad Crew** defeated **Rick Rage**, **Hack Myers**, & **Devon Storm** ... **D-Von Dudley** beat **Bubba Ray Dudley** ... **The Eliminators** beat **J.T. Smith** & **Little Guido** ... TV champ **Shane Douglas** beat **Louie Spicolli** ... **Tommy Dreamer** & **The Sandman** beat **Raven** & **Stevie Richards** ... **Sabu** beat **2 Cold Scorpio**.
(11-15-96)

—Steve Gershman

EDDYSTONE—Liberty All-Star Wrestling at the Eddystone Family Center: **Blue Thunder** pinned **J.R. Ryder** ... **Ken Porter** beat **The Overweight Lover** ... **Helter Skelter** beat **Rocco Dorsey** &

Jackie Black ... **Ace Darling** pinned **Ramblin' Rich** ... **Norm the Barfly** beat **C.N. Redd** ... **Maverick** beat **H.W. Starr** ... **Jimmy Jannetty** beat **Chubby Dudley** ... **Derek Domino** pinned **Reckless Youth** to win the vacant **LAW** heavy-weight title. The title had been declared vacant earlier that night when champ **Rockin' Rebel** did not appear for his scheduled match.
(11-02-96)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

READING—PCW at Stokesay Castle: **Jihad Hussein** beat **High Voltage** ... **Troy Mest** pinned **Diablos Macabre** ... **The Cremator** beat **Mike Mayhem** in a no-disqualification match ... **Glen Osbourne** pinned **Maxx Crimson** ... **Boogie Woogie Brown** beat **Mr. Ooh La La** ... Tag team champs **Romeo Catino** & **Boogie Woogie Brown** beat **Lance Diamond** & **Julio Sanchez** ... **Capt. Lou Albano** beat **Judd the Stud** in a Sicilian stretcher match ... **Freight Train Jones** pinned PCW champ **Mark Mest** to win the title ... **Cheetah Master** pinned **Ace Darling** ... **Barry Windham** beat **Crush** by disqualification.
(11-01-96)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

TENNESSEE

FALL BRANCH—Southern States Wrestling at the Sampson Center: **The Duke** wrestled **Mike Cooper** to a no-contest ... **Appalachian** champ **Beau James** beat **Christian Cage** ... **Steve Flynn** pinned **Sexton Hardcastle** ... **Danny Christian** defeated **Skinhead I** ... **Justin St. John** beat **Beau James** by disqualification.
(11-15-96)

—Fay Ferguson

MEMPHIS—USWA at the Big One Expo Center: **Flash Flanagan** beat **Tony Falk** ... **Mike Samples** defeated **Sean Venom** in a match in which the first wrestler to get forced into a box containing **Venom's** snake was declared the loser ... **Steven Dunn** & **Miss Texas** defeated **Crusher Bones** & **Tasha Simone** ... **Randy Hales** beat **Bert Prentice** ... Heavyweight champ **The Colorado Kid** beat Southern champ **Ric Hogan** by disqualification ... **Bill** & **Jamie Dundee** beat **Brickhouse Brown** & **Johnny Rotten** ... **Brian Christopher** beat **Wolfe D** by countout.
(11-11-96)

—Mark Mitchell

VIRGINIA

NORFOLK—WCW World War III pay-per-view at the Scope: **Ultimo Dragon** pinned **Rey Misterio Jr.** ... Wrestling with one hand tied behind his back, **Chris Jericho** beat **Nick Patrick** ... **The Giant** pinned **Jeff Jarrett** after **Sting** interfered ... **Harlem Heat** defeated **The Fabulous Canadians**. Because **Heat** won, **Sheri** was allowed five minutes alone in the ring with **Col. Parker** afterward. After **Sheri** hit him with several clotheslines, **Parker** fled to the dressing room ... Cruiserweight champion **Dean Malenko** beat **Psicosis** ... World tag team champions **Scott Hall** & **Kevin Nash** defeated **The Nasty Boys** and **The Barbarian** & **Meng** in a triangle match when **Nash** pinned **Brian Knobs** ... **The Giant** won the three-ring, 60-man battle royal, last eliminating **Lex Luger** and **Kevin Nash** simultaneously. By virtue

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of this victory, The Giant earned a shot at Hulk Hogan's World heavyweight title.
(11-24-96)

—Chuck Garland

FORK UNION—Ultimate Championship Wrestling at the Fort Union Military Academy: Major Menace won a battle royal ... California Kid defeated Riot ... Swede Stone beat Lady Killer ... Jerry E. Lee & K. Ray Jackson beat tag team champions Mr. Big Stuff & Latin Lover in a non-title match ... Ray Storm beat Demolition Ax by disqualification ... Bambi defeated Peggy Lee Leather to win the women's title ... Heavyweight champion Ricky Morton beat John Masters.
(11-23-96)

—Eddie Cheslock

RICHMOND—WWF at the Coliseum: The Sultan beat Bob Holly by submission ... Justin Bradshaw defeated Aldo Montoya ... Bart Gunn defeated Billy Gunn by countout ... Sid Vicious beat Big Van Vader in a stretcher match ... World tag team champions Davey Boy Smith & Owen Hart beat Henry & Phineas Godwinn ... Intercontinental champion Hunter Hearst Helmsley beat Marc Mero ... Shawn Michaels & The Undertaker defeated Mankind & Goldust.
(11-01-96)

—Joe Newton

WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE—Windy City Wrestling at the Serb Hall: Brandon Bishop & Terry Allen beat Hammer & Chi-Town T ... Middleweight champ Brett Sanders pinned Mikey Medallion ... T.L. Storm beat Ripper Manson by disqualification ... Tag team champs Mike Anthony & Steve Boz beat Frank Melson & Bulldozer Rollins by reverse decision ... Bone Steele beat Kevin Quinn by disqualification ... Bone Steele won a battle royal.
(11-23-96)

—Steve Cain

MILWAUKEE—WWF at the Wisconsin Center: The Sultan beat Bob Holly by submission ... Jesse James pinned Justin Bradshaw ... Billy Gunn pinned Bart Gunn ... Steve Austin beat Aldo Montoya ... World tag team champs Davey Boy Smith & Owen Hart defeated Henry & Phineas Godwinn ... Marc Mero defeated Intercontinental champ Hunter Hearst Helmsley by disqualification ... Sid Vicious defeated Big Van Vader in a stretcher match ... Shawn Michaels & The Undertaker defeated Mankind & Goldust in a steel cage match.
(11-09-96)

—Wade Bates

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

MONTREAL, QUEBEC—WWF at the Molson Centre: Henry & Phineas Godwinn beat Owen Hart & Leif Cassidy ... Barry Windham defeated Bob Holly ... Faarooq beat Aldo Montoya ... The Undertaker beat Big Van Vader ... The Sultan defeated Carl LeDuc ... Savio Vega defeated Goldust ... World champ Sid Vicious beat Steve Austin ... Billy Gunn defeated Bart Gunn ... Intercontinental champ Hunter Hearst Helmsley beat Marc Mero by disqualification ... Shawn Michaels defeated Mankind.
(11-22-96)

—Bertrand Hebert

MONTREAL, QUEBEC—Northern Championship Wrestling at the NDR Arena: Iceman beat Mike Lyons ... Alexander the Magnificent defeated Marc the Grizzly by countout ... Esel Krap defeated TV champ Steve Ace for the title ... The Sweet Boys defeated Syl Dancer & Ivan the Terrible ... The Dream Warriors & The Chameleon beat The Super Headhunters & The Gentleman ... Dream Killer beat Phil Belanger ... Golem the Giant beat Frank Blues.
(11-09-96)

—Bertrand Hebert

HULL, QUEBEC—WWF at the Robert Guertain Auditorium: The Sultan beat Bob Holly ... Faarooq beat Barry Windham ... Steve Austin beat Intercontinental champ Hunter Hearst Helmsley by disqualification ... The Undertaker defeated Goldust ... Carl LeDuc beat Aldo Montoya ... Big Van Vader beat Rocky Maivia ... Marc Mero wrestled Mankind to a double-countout ... Bart Gunn & Henry & Phineas Godwinn defeated Owen Hart, Leif Cassidy, & Billy Gunn.
(11-21-96)

—Bertrand Hebert

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA—CWF's at Chalmers Community Club: Bobby Collins defeated Jaysus Gothik ... Caveman Broda & Jackie Youngblood defeated Wildman Firpo & Bobby Collins ... E.Z. Ryder beat Vance Nevada by countout ... North American champ Robby Royce wrestled Buggy Sluggiano to a double-countout.
(11-21-96)

—Verne May

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA—Canadian Wrestling Federation's "Battleground '96" at Chalmers Community Club: Tag team champions Todd Bullet & Wildman Firpo beat The Slammin' Power Rangers ... J.T. Atlas defeated junior heavyweight champion Spice Richards to win the title ... Buggy Sluggiano beat E.Z. Ryder ... Ironman beat Chad Ripley by submission ... Steve Stryker beat Vance Nevada ... Robby Royce defeated Brian Jewel in the finals of a tournament for the vacant CWF heavyweight title ... Robby Royce, J.T. Atlas, Spice Richards, & Vance Nevada beat Buggy Sluggiano, E.Z. Ryder, Bobby Jay, & Bobby Collins in a tag team elimination match when Richards was the sole survivor.
(11-07-96)

—Vern May

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, MANITOBA—CWF benefit card at the Manitoba Development Centre: Jackie Youngblood pinned Bobby Collins ... Mike Myers beat Vance Nevada ... North American champ Robby Royce wrestled Brother Midnite to a no-contest ... Vance Nevada pinned Caveman Broda ... Robby Royce & Bobby Collins beat Jackie Youngblood & Brother Midnite ... Brother Midnite won a battle royal.
(11-18-96)

—Verne May

LAVALTRIE, QUEBEC—NCW at the Super 2000+ Flea Market: Iceman defeated Mike Lyons ... Alexander the Magnificent defeated Marc the Grizzly by countout ... Esel Krap beat The Chameleon ... The Sweet Boys beat Syl Dancer & Ivan the Terrible ... The Dream Warriors defeated Mike Fantastic & El Diablero

... Dream Killer beat The Gentleman ... Golem the Giant beat Iceman.
(11-08-96)

—Bertrand Hebert

JAPAN

TOKYO—New Japan at Korakuen Hall: *One-night tag team tournament, first round:* Yuji Nagata & Takashi Iizuka beat Norio Honaga & Junji Hirata ... Shinjiro Otani & Kensuke Sasaki beat Akitoshi Saito & Tatsutoshi Goto ... Michiyoshi Ohara & Akira Nogami beat Yutaka Yoshie & Shinya Hashimoto ... Jushin Liger & The Great Muta beat El Samurai & Tatsumi Fujinami ... Kuniaki Kobayashi & Kengo Kimura beat Tadao Yasuda & Osamu Kido ... *Second round:* Otani & Sasaki beat Nagata & Iizuka ... Ohara & Nogami beat Muta & Liger ... *Finals:* Nogami & Ohara beat Sasaki & Otani to win the tournament ... In a non-tournament match: Masahiro Chono, Hiroyoshi Tenzan, & Hiro Saito beat Satoshi Kojima, Osamu Nishimura, & Manabu Nakanishi.
(11-03-96)

—Koichi Yoshizawa

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY JANUARY

FLORIDA

MIAMI—NWA at the Bayfront Park Auditorium: Ron Fuller & Bob Roop defeated The Alaskans ... Mike Webster beat Larry O'Day ... Dennis McCord defeated George Harris ... Paul Jones defeated Johnnie Walker ... Jack Brisco pinned The Great Mephisto ... Tim Woods defeated Terry Funk.
(04-05-76)

—Sam Nathan

NORTH CAROLINA

GREENSBORO—NWA at the Olympia: Lou Thesz beat Dr. Bill Miller ... Ray Stevens defeated Mark Lewin ... The Sheik beat Kit Fox ... Hans Schmidt beat Emil Dupre ... Jim Hady defeated Steven Stanley ... Fritz Von Erich beat Moose Evans ... Bob Nandor and Joe Blanchard wrestled to a draw ... Angelo Savoldi beat John King ... Argentina Rocca beat Bob Stanley ... Dick the Bruiser defeated Alex Karras.
(04-28-63)

—PWI archives

CANADA

TORONTO, ONTARIO—WWF Wrestlemania VI pay-per-view at the SkyDome: Paul Roma beat Steve Lombardi ... Demolition beat Andre the Giant & Haku to regain the World tag team title ... Rick Martel beat Koko B. Ware ... Earthquake pinned Hercules ... Brutus Beefcake beat Curt Hennig ... Roddy Piper and Bad News Brown wrestled to a double-countout ... The Hart Foundation defeated The Bolsheviks ... The Barbarian pinned Tito Santana ... Dusty Rhodes & Sapphire defeated Randy Savage & Sherri Martel in a mixed tag team match ... The Orient Express beat The Rockers by countout ... Hacksaw Duggan defeated Dino Bravo ... Ted DiBiase beat Jake Roberts by countout to regain his "Million-Dollar Belt" ... Big Bossman beat Akeem ... Rick Rude pinned Jimmy Snuka ... The Ultimate Warrior defeated Hulk Hogan to capture the World title.
(04-01-90)

—Jason Evans

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- 1) Rick Martel
- 2) Nick Bockwinkel
- 3) Curt Hennig
- 4) Verne Gagne

The largest crowd ever to witness a pro wrestling show (190,000) was in what city?

- 1) London, England
- 2) Toronto, Ontario
- 3) Pyongyang, North Korea
- 4) Tokyo, Japan

True or False: Hulk Hogan is the only wrestler to appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated

- 1) True
- 2) False

Which of the following cities did NOT host a portion of WrestleMania II?

- 1) Chicago, Illinois
- 2) Atlantic City, New Jersey
- 3) Uniondale, New York
- 4) Los Angeles, California



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between falls

(Continued from page 5)

DESERVED CREDIT

It's about time that a major American federation finally gave Doug Furnas and Dan Kroffat, now known as Phil Lafon, a chance to show their fans what a truly great team is like. Their WWF pay-per-view debut was awesome, especially since they eliminated the World tag team champions, Davey Boy Smith and Owen Hart, during a Survivor Series match.

In my opinion, Furnas and Lafon are the most talented team in the sport today. Their extensive Japanese experience will no doubt dumbfound WWF teams with less international experience. Given the weakness of the WWF's tag team division, they should get the tag belts by the summer and will probably keep them for a long time.

GARY TUPLEHOCKEN
Saylorsburg, PA

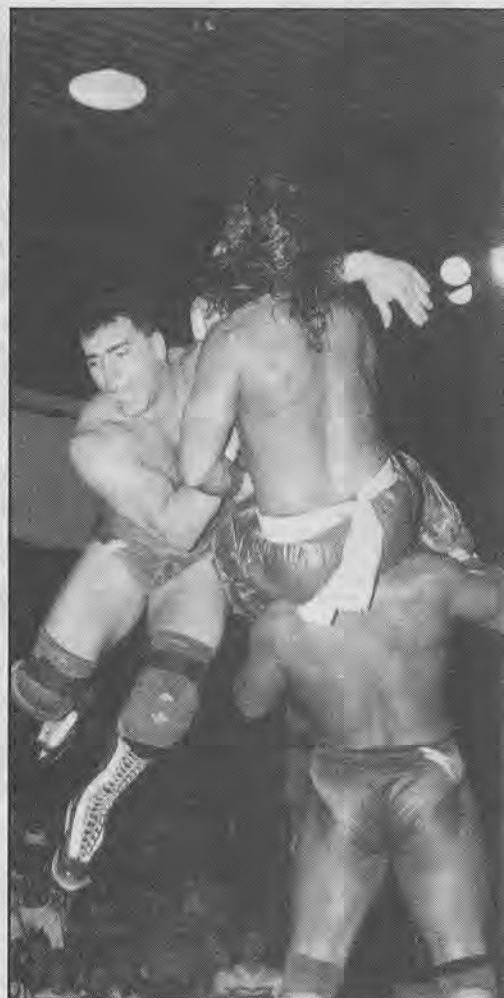
ACCOMPLICE COMES CLEAN

ECW wrestling is the kind of wrestling I'd love to see in person. I grew up watching the USWA and attended many cards at which I both passed foreign objects to wrestlers and received those same objects back to hide them from the referee. I left many cards with wrestlers' blood on my clothing. I get bored at a wrestling match if I don't have to jump out of my chair to avoid a ringside brawl. Blood and violence is what wrestling is all about. Watching the WWF is like watching an R-rated movie on network television. It just loses something in the translation.

DAVID MILLER
Oaktown, IN

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

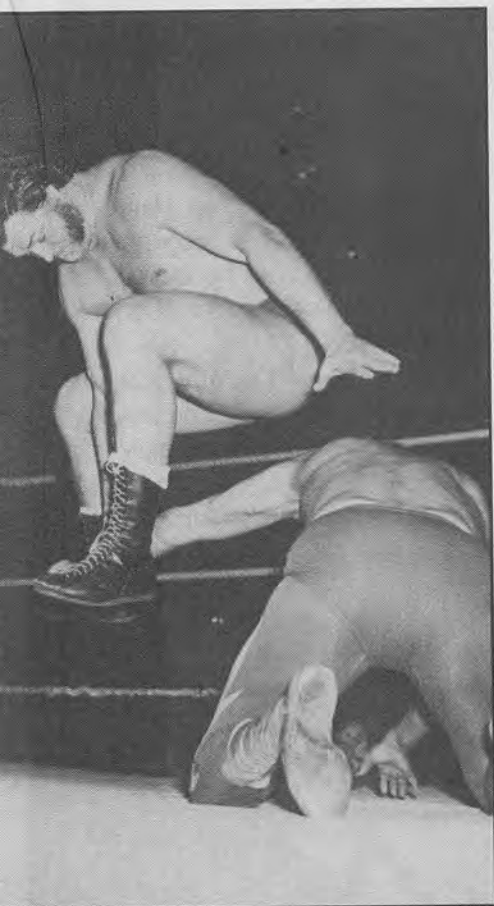
I was going through some boxes the other day and came across a collection of wrestling programs from cards held in Vancouver during the 1970s and early-1980s. While look-



Dan Kroffat and Phil Lafon (shown double-teaming Sabu) made a brief stop in ECW this fall before they signed with the WWF. Reader Gary Tuplehocken predicts they'll be WWF tag champs by summer.

ing at them, I started thinking, *What went wrong?*

These programs were loaded with a who's who of the glory days of pro wrestling. There was a nice mix of younger guys in their prime, like Jimmy Snuka, Jake Roberts, and Roddy Piper, and older veterans like Gene Kiniski, Dutch Savage, and Bulldog Brown on these weekly cards. One Stampede Wrestling card alone had Bret Hart, Davey Boy Smith, Dynamite Kid, and Jim Neidhart on it. The same card also featured a friendly interpromotional title defense by AWA champion



We don't get a lot of letters mentioning the name Don Leo Jonathan these days, but he used to be a favorite of reader Michael Binns, who misses many of the stars of the past.

Nick Bockwinkel against David Shultz, which was interesting since Stampede was associated with the NWA.

Another regular competitor was Don Leo Jonathan. He was the kind of wrestler who could easily dominate the sport today. He was tall, muscular, and fast, and to see him execute a flying headscissors was something spectacular.

These overpaid, overhyped, musclebound guys today wouldn't be able to compete with the stars of yesteryear. Even world champions today aren't the same. Back then, titles were coveted and treated with pride, class, and honor. I feel sorry for older fans who miss these days, and for the kids who will never know what quality wrestling shows are all about.

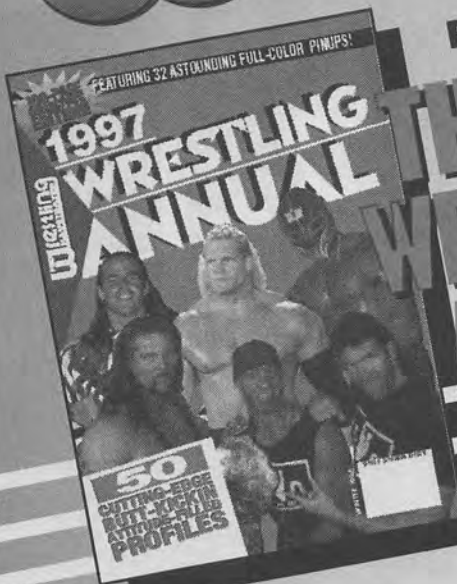
MICHAEL BINNS
N. Vancouver, BC ☐

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rocky maivia

(Continued from page 21)

... but he was pinned after getting squashed by a Vader bomb.

"Everyone's riding the Maivia wave, and this guy has proven *nothing*," complained one WWF fan

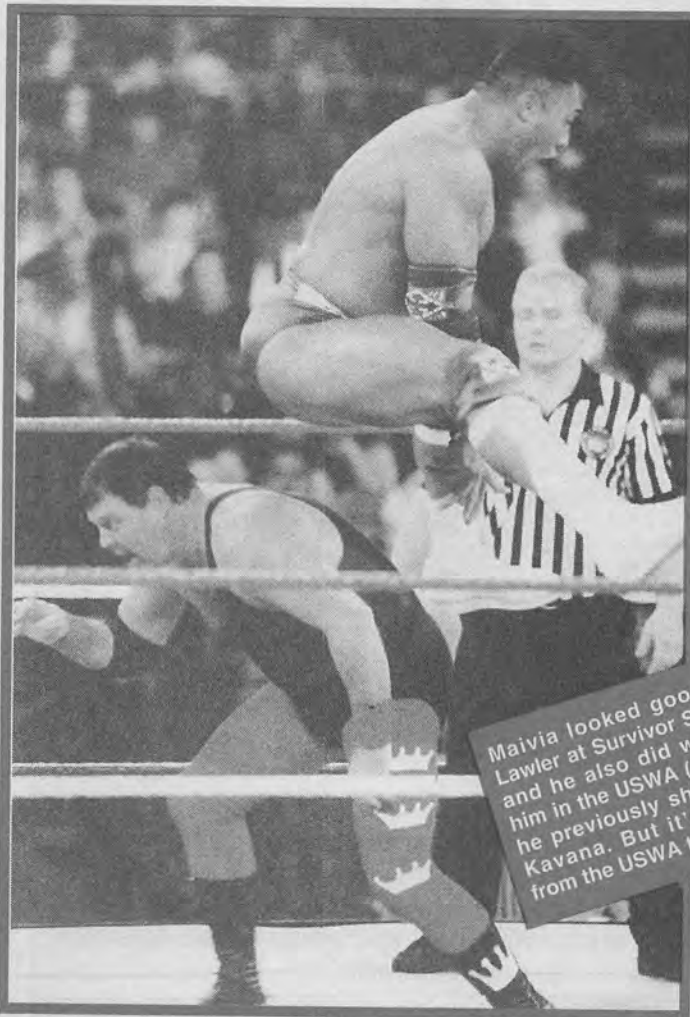
ing for matches against the best wrestlers in the WWF and talking about getting title shots.

"I think right now that both titles in the WWF are up for grabs," said Jake Roberts.

"He could make a run at either, but he has to ask himself if he's mentally

the WWF for WCW, the WWF could use a new Shawn Michaels. Perhaps if Maivia does one day become champion, he can entice other gifted wrestlers to jump ship to the WWF.

"He's the kind of guy you can build an entire organization around," claimed Sunny, who's certainly in a position to take Maivia under her expansive manager's wing.



Maivia looked good against Lawler at Survivor Series (left), and he also did well against him in the USWA (right), where he previously shined as Flex Kavana. But it's a big jump from the USWA to the WWF.

favorite. "How do we know he can handle the workload, the training, the travel? He's just 24. Is he ready to deal with all the charity work and the endless community engagements and wrestle at a high level? Can he wear a smile 24 hours a day? Does he have the heart?"

The answers to these questions will come when Maivia takes the next step up the ladder. Word around the industry is that despite the loss to Vader, he already is ask-

prepared to deal with losses if he does go for it. There are already people saying he's the future of the WWF."

The future of the WWF? More unreasonably high expectations? Actually not. With popular grapplers such as Jeff Jarrett, "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig, Roddy Piper, Kevin Nash, and Scott Hall ditching



Will this handsome and talented wrestler be the next Shawn Michaels ... or the next Barry Horowitz? The WWF is hoping he will do the Maivia name very proud.

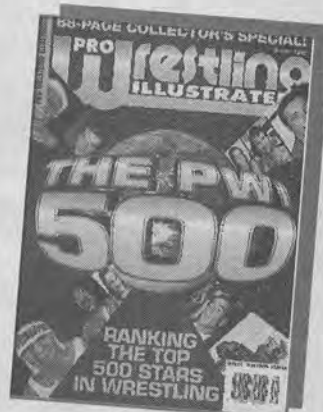
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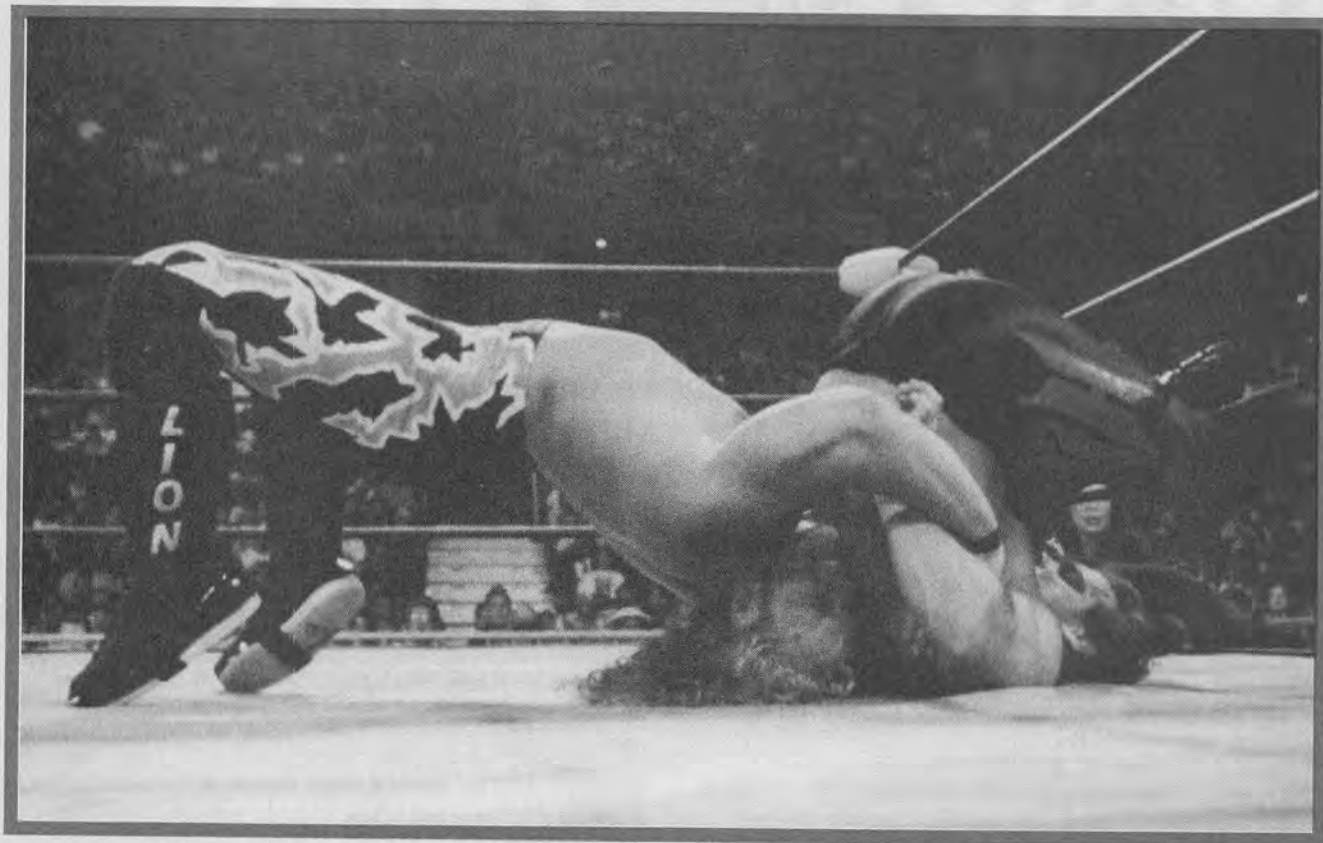
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press conference

(Continued from page 23)



Jericho nearly defeated Chris Benoit at Fall Brawl this year. Now Benoit is reportedly trying to convince the other Horsemen to take a very close look at "Lion Heart."

Jarrett to "strut" with the Horsemen. Anderson doesn't want to think about replacing his best friend in the first place. McMichael feels that Jericho is too nice.

Jericho's potential path to the Horsemen resembles Luger's trek to the group 10 years ago. Luger entered the old NWA as a rookie with unlimited potential. But the bright spotlights became seductive, and Luger craved the good life. The Horsemen offered opportunity, money, and a quick route to fame. Jericho seems just as susceptible.

While he would need to drop the nice guy image, Jericho signing with the Horsemen would capture headlines for the Horsemen, and headlines are what the group needs. The New World Order has been wreaking the kind of havoc formerly reserved for them. Their signings have shocked the

world and shaken up the balance of power in WCW, something the Horsemen used to do.

Jericho was surprisingly elusive when asked if he had any interest in joining the elite organization. "When I came to WCW, I made it my goal to get to the top," he said. "I have made alliances that have helped that effort, but I'm always looking for more.

"I love the fans. There is absolutely no doubt about that. But a wrestler needs to do what he can to be a champion. I don't want to be a mid-card wrestler. I want championships just like everyone else."

And what about the man to be replaced, Ric Flair? What does he think?

"Make no mistake about it, the 'Nature Boy' has a lot of wrestling left in him," said Flair. "I'm coming back to kick some NWO you-know-

what. But I am devoted to the Horsemen, and we need to be at full force."

The Horsemen could do well with a young talent like Jericho. He could rapidly ascend to the upper echelon in WCW by joining them. There is need on both sides. An agreement could be worked out sooner than we might think. The Horsemen are in a unique situation. They are battling both the NWO and the Dungeon of Doom. They could use help, and Flair can only do so much right now.

Can anyone ever *replace* Ric Flair? Not really. But Jericho could fill in for him ... and grow into the role of future Horsemen leader.

Soon, instead of falling back into the arms of the fans when he enters the arena, Jericho might be falling back into the arms of three men raising four fingers. □



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press conference

(Continued from page 23)



Rick Morton provided Jarrett with a tough test during one edition of *WCW Monday Nitro* this fall, but he has set his sights much higher than Morton. He'd like to be the man to topple Hulk Hogan.



LENKER: Let's talk about Ric Flair. It seems that from the day you arrived in WCW, he has taken a special interest in your career.

JARRETT: Ric Flair is a man's man and a wrestler's wrestler. I really admire him. There were times in my career when I thought that I knew it all. But Flair has provided me with advice, training, and motivation that I could only dream about when I first started.

LENKER: Not to mention a few pointers on strutting.

JARRETT: You got that right. My strut has never been better.

MANKIEWICZ: But isn't Flair damaged goods? After shoulder surgery, Flair may not have a career to come back to. Plus the other Horsemen aren't too crazy

about having you around.

JARRETT: Damaged goods? That sounds a bit strong there. I think Ric Flair will be back, simply because he is determined to make it back. But if you're right, and he isn't able to come back 100 percent, I'll carry on Ric Flair's legacy! Even if the Horsemen don't want me around, the legacy of Ric Flair is greater than any wrestling organization. I

don't need the approval of McMichael, Benoit, and Arn. Ric's support is all I need, and I won't do him wrong.

ANDERSON: Why do you think there is dissension in the Horsemen when it comes to you? After all, Flair has been the leader for years, and his word is usually gospel. What do you think the problem is?

JARRETT: I don't worry about it. I'm not gonna waste my time trying to figure out what I need to do to impress them. They may feel threatened by me. The Horsemen have always been a tight clique that is wary of outsiders. And maybe the idea of somebody replacing Ric Flair is just too unsettling. I can understand that, but their attitude reflects the problems in WCW right now.

LENKER: And they would be?

JARRETT: We are just not united. The guys in the NWO are always backing each other up. In WCW, you have constant internal fighting. Two of the most powerful groups, the Dungeon of Doom and the Horsemen, are constantly battling. I'm not saying that we all

have to be buddies, but we at least need to be focused on getting rid of the NWO. Then we can settle all the other feuds.

MANKIEWICZ: But you're asking for something that goes against the very fabric of professional wrestling. Besides, with the egos in the NWO, there will eventually be in-fighting, don't you think?

JARRETT: We can't wait for



Jarrett tries to wear down The Giant with a sleeperhold. Even though most of the Horsemen have shunned him, he is still determined to destroy the NWO.

that. WCW could be completely taken over by then. I realize that total unity is asking for a great deal, but it wouldn't have to be for very long.

MANKIEWICZ: To be completely blunt with you, Jeff, I think you might be living in a dream world.

JARRETT: Maybe, but dreams are what hope is made of, and my hope is that WCW conquers the NWO once and for all.

ANDERSON: Disregarding my colleague's editorial comments, how close were you to joining the NWO? After all, the rumors were flying that you would sign as soon as you came to WCW.

JARRETT: That's all they were, Steve—rumors. Yes, Hogan, DiBiase and that whole crew approached me about joining. But after what Hogan has said about how he made professional wrestling what it is today, I can't join with him. After all, to be in WCW is to be a part of history that goes back to Harley Race, Lou Thesz, and beyond.

LENKER: Did you at least consider it?

JARRETT: Look, Dave, I've done a lot of things in my career that I'm not real proud of. But those days are behind me. I'm not just defending wrestling's history, but my own place in it. I'm looking to win the WCW title.

MANKIEWICZ: So you want the next shot at Hogan?

JARRETT: It would be my pleasure to take that belt, clean off the spray paint, and wear it proudly.

ANDERSON: We wish you luck, Jeff, and thanks for sitting down with us.

JARRETT: Any time. □



"And as usual ... he disposes of his opponent with surgical perfection."

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time capsules



BACK THEN, SHE WAS JUST SHERRI MARTEL

That smile is the same now as it was when this photo was taken some 10 years ago. Back then, Sherri Martel was managing the AWA World tag team champions, "Playboy" Buddy Rose and Doug Somers, and now she manages former WCW World tag team champions Harlem Heat. Since then, she has changed her name to Sensational Sherri, Queen Sherri, Sensuous Sherri, and Sister Sherri. Why not just Sherri, Sherri?



"NOW WHAT WOULD YOUR DADDY THINK IF HE SAW YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT, SON?"

The picture is just too funny. Dusty Rhodes staring disapprovingly at the sight that is "Adorable" Adrian Street. And quite a sight the flamboyant Mr. Street was. Insert your own amusing Goldust line here.



"NO ... YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG. YOUR HEAD GOES UP HERE AND ... OH, FORGET IT. THIS IS HOPELESS!"

Thanks to some very aggressive tactics on the part of John Tolos during a 1973 match in Los Angeles, Raul Reyes was able to take a seat (sort of) in the front row of the Olympic Auditorium during their bout. The seats in that building never were all that comfortable, and Reyes soon decided he preferred to stand.



"JUST 99 MORE AND YOU CAN MAKE A MOVIE"

We're not sure if Dos Caras went to see Walt Disney's *101 Dalmatians* this winter, but we do know that 22 years ago, he had a couple of canines of his own. Wonder if he ever let them see him without the mask ...

Every other month, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will pore through its massive photo collection to bring you some of the most unique photographs the mat world has ever seen!



HE ALWAYS CLAIMED HE COULD GO THROUGH HIS OPPONENTS LIKE A HAND THROUGH A BOARD

Talk about a good way to intimidate any and all potential challengers. The Great Togo was very proud of his martial arts skills, and he used to put on some sensational exhibitions in the ring. Would *you* like to be on the receiving end of that karate chop?



YES, THAT IS WHO YOU THINK IT IS

This picture was taken roughly 23 years ago. It's Rocky Johnson, his wife, Ata, their son, Dwayne, and their poodle, Oscar. Yes, we all know Dwayne better as Rocky Maivia today. Notice the proud look on Johnson's face as he glances at his 15-month-old child. It's a look that says, "That's my boy, a future WWF superstar for sure!"



GENE KINISKI WAS NEVER ONE OF THOSE WRESTLERS PEOPLE SAID WAS BIGGER THAN LIFE ... WAS HE?

No, former NWA World champion Gene Kiniski was hardly a giant. Sure, he was tough, nasty, intimidating, and, at 6'5", had a height advantage over most of his opponents. But this was simply a poster put out while Kiniski was NWA champ and many wrestlers were pursuing his title. Actually it was Dory Funk Jr., who's not pictured here, who ended Kiniski's nearly three-year reign in February 1969.

"THIS ISN'T NORMAL, IS IT?"

Pancho Valdez must have had a pretty powerful elbowsmash back in 1970. All it took was one to the face of Billy Spears to do this kind of ugly damage to his eye. Just minutes after this photo was taken, Spears' left eye was almost *completely* closed.

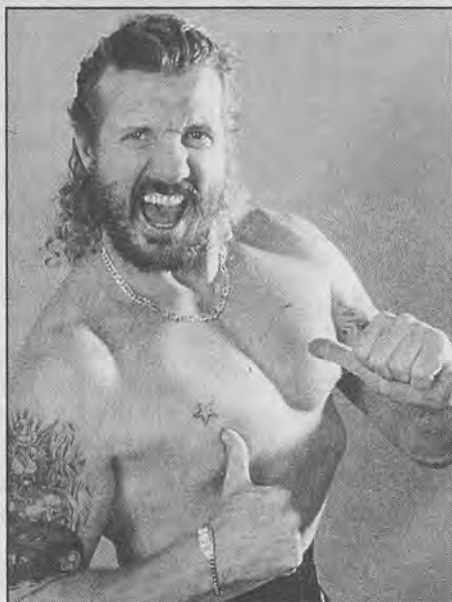


PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED®

TOP 10

- 1 SID VICIOUS**
318, West Memphis, AR
(1) **WWF World champion**
- 2 RODDY PIPER**
247, Glasgow, Scotland
(-) **No. 2 contender: WCW World title**
- 3 EDDY GUERRERO**
221, El Paso, TX
(-) **U.S. heavyweight champion**
- 4 LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
(2) **No. 3 contender: WCW World title**
- 5 SHAWN MICHAELS**
234, San Antonio, TX
(3) **No. 2 contender: WWF World title**
- 6 ULTIMO DRAGON**
175, Mexico City, Mexico
(-) **Holder of nine belts**
- 7 HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**
279, Greenwich, CT
(5) **WWF Intercontinental champion**
- 8 HULK HOGAN**
275, Venice Beach, CA
(-) **WCW World champion**
- 9 BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
(6) **No. 6 contender: WWF World title**
- 10 DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**
260, Tampa, FL
(-) **No. 5 contender: WCW World title**

PWI's Top 10



Dallas Page

TAG TEAMS

- 1 SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH**
Combined weight: 646 pounds
(1) **WCW World tag team champions**
- 2 OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH**
Combined weight: 472 pounds
(2) **WWF World tag team champions**
- 3 THE BARBARIAN & MENG**
Combined weight: 589 pounds
(9) **No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title**
- 4 DOUG FURNAS & PHIL LAFON**
Combined weight: 475 pounds
(-) **No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title**
- 5 THE ELIMINATORS**
Combined weight: 459 pounds
(7) **ECW tag team champions**
- 6 THE NASTY BOYS**
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(5) **No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title**
- 7 HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN**
Combined weight: 531 pounds
(4) **No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title**
- 8 NEW DIESEL & NEW RAZOR RAMON**
Combined weight: 646 pounds
(-) **No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title**
- 9 THE GANGSTAS**
Combined weight: 456 pounds
(6) **No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title**
- 10 STEVEN DUNN & FLASH FLANAGAN**
Combined weight: 461 pounds
(-) **No. 1 contenders: USWA tag title**

WCW

World Champion:
HULK HOGAN

- (C) 275, Venice Beach, CA
- 1—EDDY GUERRERO**
(-) 221, El Paso, TX
 - 2—RODDY PIPER**
(-) 247, Glasgow, Scotland
 - 3—LEX LUGER**
(1) 265, Chicago, IL
 - 4—ULTIMO DRAGON**
(-) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
 - 5—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**
(10) 260, Tampa, FL
 - 6—JEFF JARRETT**
(4) 230, Nashville, TN
 - 7—THE GIANT**
(3) 430, parts unknown
 - 8—DEAN MALENKO**
(2) 216, Tampa, FL
 - 9—JUSHIN LIGER**
(-) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
 - 10—REY MISTERIO JR.**
(7) 140, San Diego, CA

WWF

World Champion:
SID VICIOUS

- (C) 318, West Memphis, AR
- 1—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**
(1) 279, Greenwich, CT
 - 2—SHAWN MICHAELS**
(2) 234, San Antonio, TX
 - 3—MANKIND**
(9) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM
 - 4—THE UNDERTAKER**
(5) 328, parts unknown
 - 5—STEVE AUSTIN**
(4) 241, Dallas, TX
 - 6—BRET HART**
(3) 235, Calgary, Alberta
 - 7—GOLDUST**
(-) 254, Austin, TX
 - 8—FAAROOQ**
(6) 260, Perry, GA
 - 9—AHMED JOHNSON**
(-) 255, Pearl River, MS
 - 10—MARC MERO**
(7) 235, Buffalo, NY

USWA

USWA Champion:
JERRY LAWLER

- (C) 234, Memphis, TN
- 1—WOLFIE D**
(10) 250, parts unknown
 - 2—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
(4) 230, Memphis, TN
 - 3—AKEEM MUHAMMAD**
(-) 318, Harlem, NY
 - 4—J.C. ICE**
(-) 221, Memphis, TN
 - 5—BILL DUNDEE**
(-) 219, Melbourne, Australia
 - 6—KAREEM OLAJUWON**
(-) 215, Memphis, TN
 - 7—MABEL**
(-) 568, Harlem, NY
 - 8—MO**
(-) 285, Harlem, NY
 - 9—BRICKHOUSE BROWN**
(8) 227, Tampa, FL
 - 10—STEVEN DUNN**
(7) 240, Tampa, FL

ECW

ECW Champion:
RAVEN

- (C) 235, Short Hills, NJ
- 1—SHANE DOUGLAS**
(1) 240, Pittsburgh, PA
 - 2—THE SANDMAN**
(C) 244, Philadelphia, PA
 - 3—PIT BULL II**
(-) 231, Philadelphia, PA
 - 4—TAZ**
(6) 248, Red Hook, NY
 - 5—TOMMY DREAMER**
(4) 245, Yonkers, NY
 - 6—SABU**
(5) 220, Bombay
 - 7—CHRIS CANDIDO**
(10) 226, Carteret, NJ
 - 8—ROB VAN DAM**
(9) 227, Battle Creek, MI
 - 9—BRIAN LEE**
(7) 251, Los Angeles, CA
 - 10—LOUIE SPICOLLI**
(3) 248, Los Angeles, CA

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

- 1 RODDY PIPER**
247, Glasgow, Scotland
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular
- 2 BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular
- 3 LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular
- 4 THE UNDERTAKER**
328, parts unknown
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular
- 5 SID VICIOUS**
318, West Memphis, AR
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular
- 6 RICK STEINER**
248, Detroit, MI
Last issue: unrated
- 7 SHAWN MICHAELS**
234, San Antonio, TX
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular
- 8 REY MISTERIO JR.**
140, San Diego, CA
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular
- 9 AHMED JOHNSON**
255, Pearl River, MS
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular
- 10 EDDY GUERRERO**
221, El Paso, TX
Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular

MOST HATED

- 1 HULK HOGAN**
275, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated
- 2 STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Dallas, TX
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3 KEVIN NASH**
356, Detroit, MI
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated
- 4 SCOTT HALL**
290, Miami, FL
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated
- 5 HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**
279, Greenwich, CT
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated
- 6 FAAROOQ**
260, Perry, GA
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated
- 7 MANKIND**
277, Truth or Consequences, NM
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated
- 8 SIX**
212, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 9 Most Hated
- 9 JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
Last issue: No. 10 Most Hated
- 10 RAVEN**
235, Short Hills, NJ
Last issue: unrated

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(C) 287, Gisu, Japan

- 1-ULTIMO DRAGON**
(1) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2-THE GREAT MUTA**
(7) 245, Tokyo, Japan
- 3-JUSHIN LIGER**
(3) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
- 4-RIKI CHOSHU**
(6) 246, Yamaguchi, Japan
- 5-MASA CHONO**
(4) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 6-SATOSHI KOJIMA**
(8) 223, Tokyo, Japan
- 7-HIROYOSHI TENZAN**
(9) 270, Tokyo, Japan
- 8-KENSUKE SASAKI**
(2) 233, Tokyo, Japan
- 9-KURASAWA**
(5) 242, Tokyo, Japan
- 10-SHINJIRO OTANI**
(10) 215, Yokohama, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
KENTA KOBASHI
(C) 261, Tokyo, Japan

- 1-AKIRA TAUE**
(3) 265, Tokyo, Japan
- 2-MITSU HARU MISAWA**
(2) 228, Saitama, Japan
- 3-TOSHI AKI KAWADA**
(1) 245, Tizhigi, Japan
- 4-JUN AKIYAMA**
(4) 230, Hiroshima, Japan
- 5-JOHN NY ACE**
(9) 250, San Bernadino, CA
- 6-SABU**
(-) 220, Bombay
- 7-TAKAO OMORI**
(10) 221, Tokyo, Japan
- 8-STEVE WILLIAMS**
(-) 265, Norman, OK
- 9-ROB VAN DAM**
(8) 227, Battle Creek, MI
- 10-STAN HANSEN**
(5) 322, Borger, TX

For period ended December 30, 1996

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

- 1-SHAWN MICHAELS** 93 points
- 2-THE GIANT** 56 points
- 3-LEX LUGER** 50 points
- 4-STING** 44 points
- 5-THE UNDERTAKER** 38 points

TAG TEAMS

- 1-HARLEM HEAT** 57 points
- 2-HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN** 56 points
- 3-OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH** 46 points
- 4-SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH** 46 points
- 5-RICK & SCOTT STEINER** 44 points

ACW: ACW Champion—T. Rantula; **1**—Tito Santana; **2**—Bam Bam Bigelow; **3**—Rick Martel; **4**—Frank Stalletto; **5**—911; **6**—Brick Bronsky; **7**—Johnny Graham; **8**—Lord Zoltan; **9**—Reckless Youth; **10**—Glen Osbourne.

CWA: CWA Champion—Kevin Sullivan; **1**—Tony Rumble; **2**—King Kong Bundy; **3**—Tony Atlas; **4**—Vic Steamboat; **5**—Doink the Clown; **6**—Salvatore Sincere; **7**—Knuckles Nelson; **8**—Steve Corino; **9**—Mohammed Hussein; **10**—Pink Assassin.

MEWF: MEWF Champion—Axl Rotten; **1**—Mark Schrader; **2**—Corporal Punishment; **3**—Adam Flash; **4**—Jimmy Cicero; **5**—Joe Thunder; **6**—Devon Storm; **7**—Quinn Nash; **8**—The Cat Burglar; **9**—Lucifer; **10**—Jason Knight.

PCW: PCW Champion—Freight Train Jones; **1**—Mark Mest; **2**—Lance Diamond; **3**—Cheetah Master; **4**—Ace Darling; **5**—Troy Mest; **6**—Boogie Woogie Brown; **7**—Maxx Crimson; **8**—Ray Odyssey; **9**—The Cremator; **10**—Diablos Macabre.

PWA: PWA Champion—The Hater; **1**—Great Sasuke; **2**—Lenny Lane; **3**—J.B. Trask; **4**—Dan Jessor; **5**—Wellington Wilkinson; **6**—Horace the Psychopath; **7**—Nailz; **8**—Charlie Norris; **9**—Kenny Jay; **10**—Blacktop Bully.

PWF: PWF Champion—Italian Stallion; **1**—George South; **2**—Madd Maxxine; **3**—Flaming Youth; **4**—Terry Austin; **5**—Carolina Dreamer; **6**—Cruel Connection II; **7**—Star Ryder; **8**—Chris Hamrick; **9**—Masked Maniac; **10**—Gladiator II.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 19 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

What's going on here? Midway through 1996, we knew exactly where **Sting** and "**Stone-Cold**" **Steve Austin** stood. Sting was, well, the same old Sting. Same old dependable



Steve Austin

Sting. Defender of all that was good in WCW. Loved the fans, especially the kids, his little "Stingers." Always wanted to win his matches the right way. Stood up for WCW against **The Outsiders**, **Scott Hall** and **Kevin Nash**. Would soon be standing up to WCW traitor **Hulk Hogan**.

Among the most popular men in the sport.

Austin was just the opposite. He was essentially the same Steve Austin he had always been. A little more serious than he had been in years past, yes, but still a rulebreaker. Still very arrogant. Hated everyone else in the WWF. Didn't give a damn about anyone but himself, and was happy to admit that fact. Had just won the 1996 King of the Ring tournament and was feuding with the likes of **Jake Roberts**, **Marc Mero**, and **Savio Vega**.

Definitely among the most hated men in the sport.

But what has happened since? Austin, if anything, has gotten meaner and more callous. But more and more fans have taken to supporting him. In a few of his matches with WWF Intercontinental champion **Hunter Hearst Helmsley** in December, the fans were solidly behind "Stone-Cold." Even when he wrestled **Bret Hart** at Survivor Series, a decent portion of the people were supporting him, not "The Hitman."

We're placing him high on the Most Hated list this issue because we still get a lot of anti-Austin mail, but we're wondering if the fans will eventually "force" Austin into becoming a full-fledged fan favorite. Sound farfetched? It shouldn't. Remember that **Shawn Michaels** was much the same way a few years ago. He was (and still is) arrogant, and he used to make no secret of the fact that he didn't think the fans were as good as him. People cheered him anyway, and he grew to love those people eventually.

Austin obviously isn't anywhere near as flamboyant as "The Heartbreak Kid," but the same thing could happen to him.

Michaels' popularity, by the way, has taken a hit recently. It's obvious that he decided to change his ways a bit after his loss to "**Psycho**" **Sid Vicious** at Survivor Series. It looks to us that he's on the road back to rulebreaking, while Sid remains on the fence between the rulebreaking and fan favorite camps. We've placed him above Shawn on this issue's Most Popular list.

And about Sting: We addressed his situation in the



Sting

January 1997 issue, where we explained why we were removing his name from the Most Popular rankings altogether. Now it's time for us to seriously consider putting him on the Most Hated list. On three separate occasions in November and December, he interrupted WCW matches for no good reason. Twice he DDT'd **Jeff Jarrett**. Another time, he did it to **Rick Steiner**. On all three occasions, he left without telling anyone why he did what he did.

Looks like the behavior of a rulebreaker to us.

Well, maybe not. We're going to hold off listing Sting in the Most Hated rankings for at least one more issue because we're willing to give him the benefit of the doubt just a little longer. He's still battling mostly rulebreakers (including **The Giant**) when he does compete these days, and he has resisted the tempting offers repeatedly presented to him by Hogan, **Ted DiBiase**, **Eric Bischoff**, and the rest of the **New World Order**. That has to count for something, especially given Bischoff's threat against all wrestlers who don't convert their WCW contracts to NWO contracts.

He's not on the list right now, but if we had to come up with the 20 most hated men in the sport right now rather than just 10, he might have made the cut.

That's all for this month! If you have any comments about the situations involving Steve Austin or Sting, anything else you see in this column, or anything pertaining to our ratings in general, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

BACK ISSUES OF



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[NOTE: Cover stories noted in boldface.]

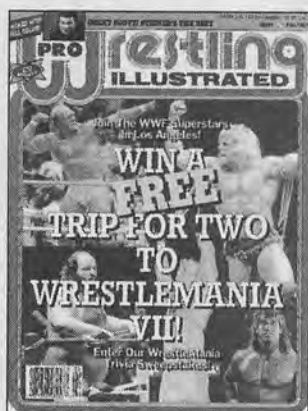
February 1988/CENTERFOLD: Ronnie Garvin. **Savage & Elizabeth**, Garvin, Von Erichs, Freebirds.

April 1989/CENTERFOLD: Rick Steiner. **Randy Savage**, Ted Turner, Richter, Paul E., Powers of Pain.

December 1990/CENTERFOLD: Sting. **New WWF Blood**, Four Horsemen, Kerry, Doom, Gilbert, Slaughter.

January 1991/CENTERFOLD: Kerry Von Erich. **WWF vs. NWA**, Hogan, Hansen, Sting, Sherri & Warrior.

February 1991/CENTERFOLD: 1991 calendar. **WrestleMania**, Vicious, DiBiase-Rhodes, Steiner, Power & Glory.



May 1991/CENTERFOLD: Arn Anderson. **Hulk Hogan**, Rude, Flair-Sting, Thesz.

June 1991/CENTERFOLD: Hacksaw Duggan. **Hulk Hogan**, Cactus, Flair, Nasty Boys, Steiner.

January 1993/CENTERFOLD: Jeff Jarrett. **Flair/Summerslam**, Simmons by Bowden, Von Erich interview.

February 1993/CENTERFOLD: Curt Hennig. **Ramon**, Snuka-Muraco, Rude, Rhodes, Roberts interview.

April 1993/CENTERFOLD: Barry Windham. **Steiners**, Backlund, Sting-Muta, Hawk-Sasaki.

November 1993/CENTERFOLD: The Steiners. **WCW Midyear Report**, Doink, Funk-Gilbert, Race, Yokozuna.

January 1994/CENTERFOLD: Jerry Lawler. **Doink**, Nasty Boys, Steiners, Cornette, Vicious.

May 1994/CENTERFOLD: Tatanka. **Yokozuna-Luger**, Flair-Vader, Heenan, **WrestleMania** retrospective.

July 1994/CENTERFOLD: Rick Steamboat. **Razor Ramon**, Flair-Regal, Cactus, Lawler, Yokozuna workout.

August 1994/CENTERFOLD: Doink & Dink. **Bret Hart/WrestleMania X**, Steiners, Albano, steroid trial.

November 1994/CENTERFOLD: Randy Savage. **Hogan In WCW**, Cactus, Yokozuna, Lawler, Michaels, Jake.

Winter 1994/CENTERFOLD: Terry Funk. **Hulkamania Wild Again**, McMahon, Vicious, AAA, Flair.

January 1995/CENTERFOLD: Razor Ramon. **Tatanka**, Hogan, Alundra, ECW vs. NWA, Brian Lee.

February 1995/CENTERFOLD: Johnny B. Badd. **WCW Civil War**, Pillman & Austin, Abdullah, Bret Hart.

April 1995/CENTERFOLD: Sabu. **WWF Title Turmoil**, Hogan, Cornette, Diesel, Alundra, Rhodes.

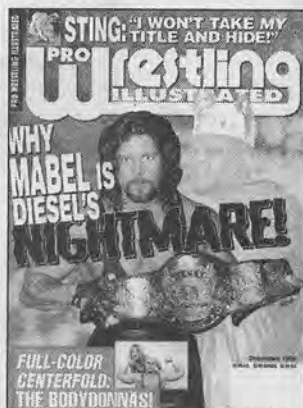
May 1995/CENTERFOLD: Sting. **Diesel**, Savage, Sabu, Hogan-Beefcake, Vader, Owen Hart.

July 1995/CENTERFOLD: Bam Bam Bigelow. **Hulk Hogan**, Sullivan, USWA blood, Yokozuna, revitalize the WWF.

August 1995/CENTERFOLD: Big Van Vader. **Women In Wrestling**, Rottens, Sting-Hogan, Road Warriors.

October 1995/CENTERFOLD: Harlem Heat. **Razor Ramon**, ideal WWF champ, Flair, Savage, Omdorff.

November 1995/CENTERFOLD: Hulk Hogan. **Summerslam**, Vader, Michaels, Backlund, North Korea, ECW rules.



December 1995/CENTERFOLD: Bodydonnas. **Diesel-Mabel**, Sting, Yokozuna, Savio, Regal-Eaton, Lawler-LeDuc.

January 1996/CENTERFOLD: Arn Anderson. **WWF vs. WCW**, Diesel & Shawn, Luger, Summerslam.

February 1996/CENTERFOLD: Shawn Michaels. **Randy Savage**, Hogan, Gangstas-Public Enemy, Austin.

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▲▲▲ WRESTLING ▲▲▲ NEW WORLD ORDER

NEW WORLD ORDER GOES INTERNATIONAL! Masa Chono Begins Recruiting In Japan

By STEVE ANDERSON

PENSACOLA, FL—It wasn't a huge surprise when Big Bubba Rogers, M. Wall Street, and Scott Norton revealed to the world that they had joined the New World Order on December 16, but when New Japan's Masa Chono opened his jacket and showed that he had an NWO shirt on, more than a few people were stunned.

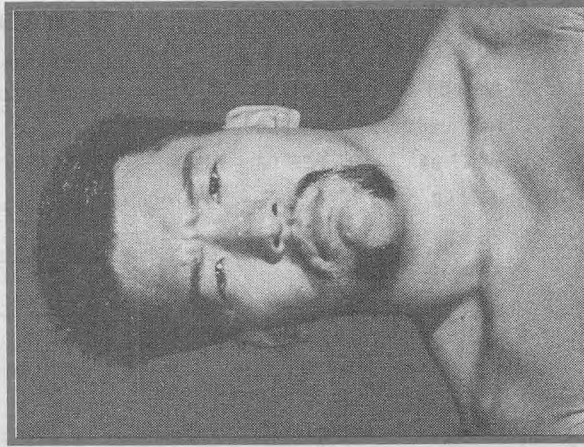
It has now become apparent that the NWO is intent on taking over more than WCW. The group already has Chono working to sign some of the top stars of New Japan.

"The chance to join an elite organization like the New World Order was something I could not turn down," Chono said through an interpreter. "I have the opportunity now to

make more money than I ever made with New Japan, and I want others in my country to have the same opportunity."

Chono declined to name any of the Japanese stars he has contacted about joining the NWO, but sources in the Orient say he has talked to Jushin Liger, The Great Muta, and Shinya Hashimoto. All three men refused comment when asked about the NWO.

"I know a lot of powerful people in Japan, too," said the NWO's Ted DiBiase, "and I've already talked to most of them. We might open a whole separate office over there. We keep telling people the NWO is just getting started. They think we're kidding. They think they'll get rid of us in time, but we just get stronger and stronger."



Masa Chono became the first Japanese wrestler to join the NWO when he signed on with the group in December. Now he's pressuring other Japanese stars to follow suit.

Honky Tonk Man Eying I-C Belt?

By DAVE LENKER

DAYTONA BEACH, FL—Cover your ears—he's back again! The Honky Tonk Man has returned to the WWF, where he is again reminding everyone that he had the longest reign of any Intercontinental champion in history.

Honky Tonk made his return in mid-December at two WWF TV tapings and did commentary for several matches.

He won his I-C title from Rick Steamboat in June 1987 and didn't relinquish it until The

Ultimate Warrior pinned him at SummerSlam '88. And while he didn't come right out and say he wanted to again challenge for the belt, he did hint that he'd like to do so.

"Hey, I got nothin' against that Hunter Helmsley fella," he said, "but he's no Honky Tonk Man. He walks around with his nose held high in the air. He's got no style, no pizzazz. And I know he can't sing and dance. I bet all the great people around here would love to see The Honky Tonk Man knock him off his high horse, because they all love me."



The Honky Tonk Man is back in the WWF again. Right now he's just doing some broadcast work, but he sounds as if he'd like a shot at regaining the I-C belt.

Dory Funk Challenges Inoki

By MATT BROCK

TOKYO—New Japan's Antonio Inoki has a knack for beating superstars two decades or more his junior, but his next big match might be against someone closer to his age, former NWA World champion Dory Funk Jr.

Funk recently issued a formal challenge to Inoki, and at press time the two men were trying to work out the final details for a match. What makes this such big news is that for years, Funk competed for All-Japan, the chief rival of Inoki's New Japan.

"I don't want to finally hang 'em up without getting Mr. Inoki in the ring," Funk said. "There's no question that he's a legend. People say I'm a legend. I think it'd be a great match. I have a lot of respect for the man, but if it does happen, he better not underestimate me. I think a lot of younger guys have made the mistake of underestimating him, and they paid for it."

In the last few years, Inoki has cleanly defeated stars such as Sting, Lord Steven Regal, Ric Flair, and Big Van Vader. "I hope we can get this done," Inoki said.

Miss Texas Now Queen Moesha

By DAVE ROSENBAUM

MEMPHIS, TN—The Nation of Domination continues to grow larger—at least in the USWA.

Miss Texas, who for years defended the USWA against rulebreaking women and the occasional rulebreaking man, says USWA promoters made her a lot of promises over the last few years but rarely made good on them. She believes the NOD will make her an even bigger star than she already is.

Now, in addition to Wolfie D and J.C. Ice, the USWA version of the NOD consists of Randy Hales (renamed Randy X), Reggie B. Fine (renamed Kareem Olajuwon), and Akeem Mohammed. Moesha helped the rest of the NOD attack Jerry Lawler during one USWA TV broadcast in December and claims she could do the same to anyone else who speaks out against the NOD.

"Jerry Lawler and Brian Christopher think they're kings around here," Moesha said, "but it's time they stepped aside in favor of us. They need to treat us with the respect we deserve."

AROUND THE GLOBE

BAUNATAL, GERMANY

If you weren't keeping a close eye on the results of WCW's tour of Germany in December, you might not have realized that The Booty Man did return to WCW rings then. He lost to the NWO's Six on one card after Vincent interfered. Booty, of course, was denied membership in the NWO in August. He said after the loss to Six that "Hogan hasn't seen the last of me."

GIFU, JAPAN

Several months ago, Sabu announced plans to team regularly with Rob Van Dam, his regular ECW tag team partner, in All-Japan, but since that deal fell through, he chose the powerful Gary Albright as a replacement.

Surprisingly, the collaboration hasn't worked that well. The two men have already lost several key bouts in the Orient.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Ever wonder what happened to "Belfast Bruiser" David Findlay, one of Lord Steven Regal's least favorite people? He returned to Europe earlier this year after a successful stint in WCW and is now the Catch Wrestling Association Intercontinental

champion. He recently defended the belt against Hector Garza in what was called by many the best CWA match in some time.

HOT SHOT

This is what you call wreaking havoc on Havoc Inc. That's Sexton Hardcastle of the tag team Sex and Violence who made sure Hollywood of the tag team Havoc Inc. was comfortable in his chair before he hit him with this flying bodypress. Good thing Hollywood stayed seated for the move, too. Imagine the damage Hardcastle could have done to himself had his foe moved out of the way. *Ouch!*

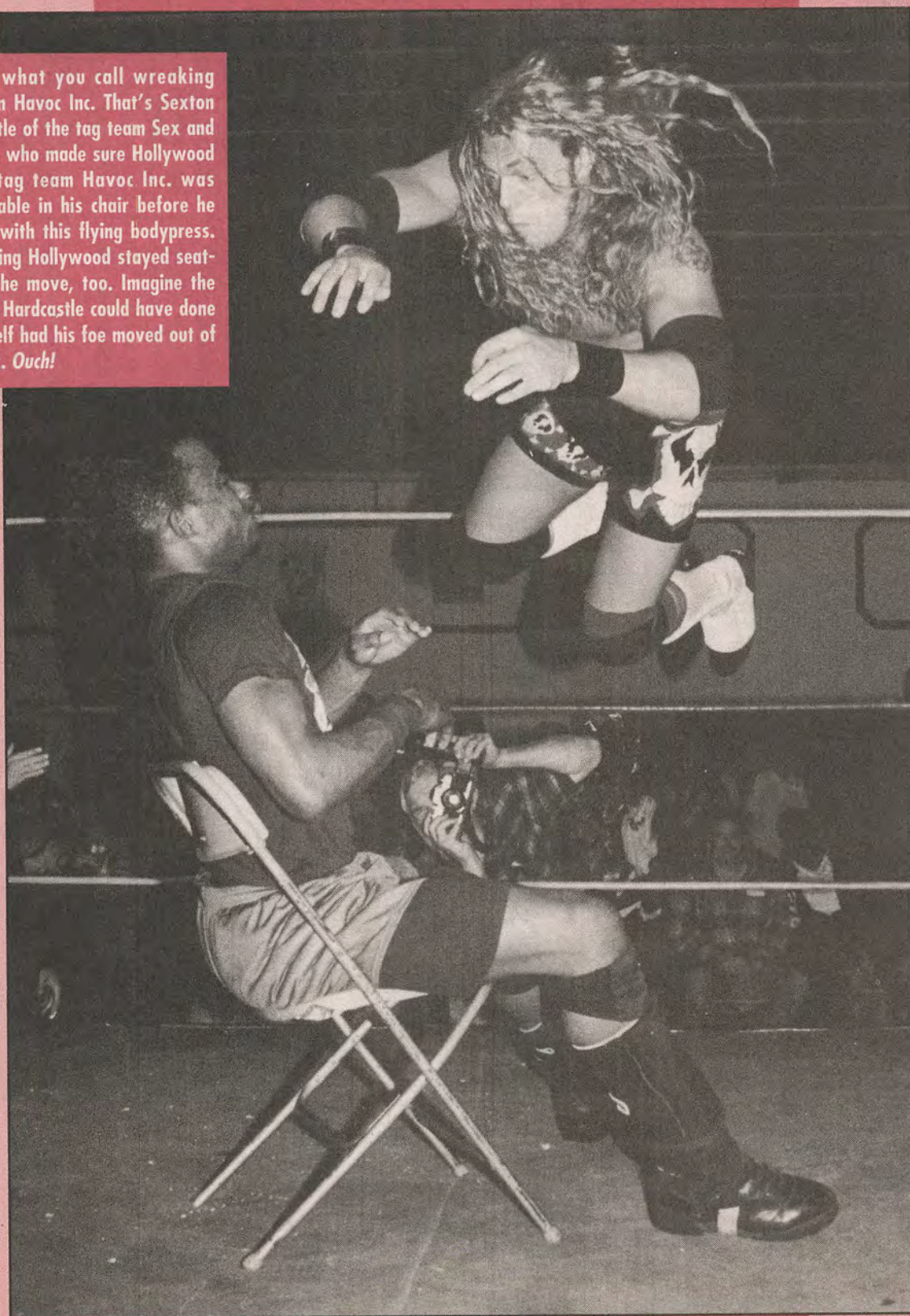


Photo by Mario Casadei

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